



R O S A R A ;
OR, THE
A D V E N T U R E S
OF AN
A C T R E S S :



R O S A R A ;

OF THE

A D V E R T I S E M E N T S



A C T I V E S :

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R O S A R A ;
OR, THE
A D V E N T U R E S
O F A N
A C T R E S S :
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S T O R Y
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R E A L L I F E .

Translated from the Italian of PIETRO CHIARI.

V O L. III.

L O N D O N :

Printed for R. BALDWIN and S. BLADON, in
Paternoster-Row.

M D C C L X X I .

ROSA R A

of the

ADVENTURES

of an

ACTRESS

A

Y T S



THE ALICE

THE ALICE

Vol. 1

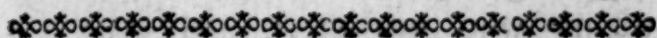
1850

THE ALICE

THE ALICE



MEMOIRS
OF AN
ACTRESS.



CHAP. XVII. CONTINUED.



THAT very evening, then
I pretended a violent disorder
in my head, and went
early to bed. My illness, according to
my rules of physic, was to last all the
next day. The Marchioness was in
some apprehension for me, and came

VOL. III.

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to

to see how I was, before I lay down : but Lord B——, who was not forewarned of my plan, committed a most egregious blunder in his ir sufferable anxiety for me. At midnight he ventured to come, and tap at the door of my chamber, in which the Marchioness had left one of her women to attend me : but, her son, ignorant of that circumstance, concluding that I was alone, he rapped gently at the door ; and, on my asking who was there, and what he wanted, he replied, open the door to me, my dear, open the door to me ; you have nothing to fear. The maid, wondering who was addressed by the soft expression, my dear, and well knowing that it was not applicable to her, had almost discovered our secret : and thus was I brought to the brink of ruin. Seeing her in a good deal of confusion, I forgot for a while the pain in my head : and, raising my voice, that the Count might



might distinctly hear me, I desired her to thank him for his goodness, and to acquaint him that I was considerably better. He now perceived, that I was not alone in my room that night; and luckily, went away without pressing any further for admittance: but his tender manner of accosting me, and his clandestine visit, filled my mind afresh with a thousand fears; which were verified, a few days after, to my great misery.

The maid-servants of the house, though they payed me some respect, as they saw that their mistress herself had a regard for me, treated me, notwithstanding, as one of themselves; and as a person whom the Marchioness had patronized merely out of compassion. She, who stayed in my room with me that night, had a greater ascendant over her mistress than any of the rest; because she came nearest her

in her austerity; and in the time of her youth had been the faithful repository of her frailties. Notwithstanding her great skill in dissimulation, I saw very well, that the accident of that night had made some impression upon her: nor should I have found any advantage in endeavouring to remove her suspicions, by a pretence; and I thought I should only make the matter worse, by shewing myself apprehensive of her.

Early next day, Lady A—— arrived, with her husband, and two other gentlemen, whom I knew perfectly well. All the house then resounded with unusual mirth: which threw more gloom than gaiety into my mind: for I was very much afraid of being surprized, and discovered. I took all the precautions that seemed most likely to secure me in that conjuncture: and, amongst the rest, I would not suffer the
window

window-shutters of my chamber to be open, under a pretext that the light wounded my eyes, and increased my head-ach. Whenever the maid went out of the room, I desired her to shut the door carefully after her, pretending that I was for endeavouring to get a little rest; as I had slept none the night before. Who would suppose, that all these provisions were vain; and that I fell into a net, which I spread for myself, with my own hands.

The forenoon passed without any accident: but in the afternoon, when I had taken a little refreshment, as I found myself quite exhausted, I fell into a sound sleep of two hours; and, consequently, was insensible to any thing that passed in my room in that time. I awoke in some confusion, hearing my door open; but I recovered from my alarm, on seeing the maid enter,

B 3

who

6 MEMOIRS *of*

who, congratulated me on the comfortable repose I had got; I am sorry, added she, that I have disturbed you, by opening the door; though I did it as gently as I could. The physician himself, recommended it to me to let you sleep; nor would he wake you when he came to visit you: but contented himself with feeling your pulse: and, finding you had no fever upon you, he went away, telling us, that sleep was your properest restorative; and that as soon as you awoke, you would be well.

I was ill enough even before he came; and the sound of these words made me ill in earnest: for they seemed to forebode some fatal event. A physician, then, thought I to myself, has been in my room, and has felt my pulse, without my perceiving it, immersed in sleep as I was. Ah! sleep, sleep! thou hast always been fatal to my

my quiet, and security! If this physician knew me to be the dancer, who was here two years ago, what will become of me: since, as I was asleep, I had it not in my power to beg of him, for humanity's sake not to discover me? Such were the ideas, which agitated my mind, and confounded me to such a degree, that I betrayed myself. The eagerness of my anxiety, made me imprudently bold: who ordered you to let a physician visit me, without acquainting me beforehand that he was coming? said I to her: nor, in saying so, did I reflect that I was speaking to a person, whose suspicion had been excited, by the accident of the preceding night. My lady ordered me, answered she: and I had well nigh, broken out into some disapprobation even of her ladyship's management; so provoked was I at a piece of untoward luck, which I took it for granted, had ruined me for

ever. I had nothing to save me from absolute despair, but my hope, that this physician had not seen me before. I, therefore, put on an air of more composure, and, with a seeming indifference, asked who the physician was, that had been visiting me by her ladyship's order? He was named to me: but, though his name was even new to me, having danced before the unknown multitude of Palermo, I could not be certain that I was as much a stranger to him. Terror had such an effect upon my frame that day, that it made me ill in reality. I could not be sure whether I was detected or not: and I had yet room to flatter myself, that I had escaped the evil, which I feared had befallen me. But I know not how it was, my heart had always hitherto too truly presag'd it's misfortunes; and the gloom of past experience almost totally obscured the cheering rays of hope.

C H A P.

CHAP. I.

The Marchioness's discourses with Rosara, regarding the Physician, and her Daughter; which augments her Fears.

AS I was a stranger to my real situation, every object alarmed me, though I knew not, distinctly, where my danger lay; nor, consequently, the means of obviating it. As I was generally thinking of the worst, which is the case with the unfortunate, I was, every now and then, figuring to myself, that I was before the Marchioness's tribunal; that she was upbraiding me for my imposition, and dooming me to severe punishment for it. In such a case, I was sensible her presence would be e-

nough to convict me : and I found I should not have courage to look her in the face. Had I been certain that the physician knew me, I would have fled from the house, and out of Palermo, rather than have exposed myself to the resentment of a lady, and her mother, who had it so much in their power to chastise my hypocrisy. I could not tell what course I should take to resolve my doubts : for, I knew not of whom to enquire : and, I was afraid, that the marchioness, with her usual art, would take care to have the matter reserved, that she might come to an explanation with me herself ; in order to make my confusion complete. Alas ! thought I, what shall I do, on such an attack ! and, into what corner shall I run, to spare myself the blushes of conviction ! As Lady A—— was gone, I expected the mine would burst about my ears ; tho' my lover, and Don Cirillo, might not
be

be so well apprized of my danger. As I dreaded an interview with the Marchioness, I thought it would be better still to keep my bed ; as if I was indisposed : but, should the physician, thought I, return to visit me, by her orders, I should then be worse off than before. After I had resolved these circumstances within myself, I determined to conceal my uneasiness, lest I should aggravate my difficulties by my imprudence. The maid, however, on her entering my room a few minutes after, perceived that I was disordered ; and asked me, how I found myself. I told her, I was a good deal better, for fear of the physician ; though in my life I was never worse. Let us be joyous then, said she : for, I believe, we shall have a marriage in the family soon ; as the Countess of A—— has come to propose Lady N——'s daughter, to the Marchioness, for a wife to her son : there

cannot be a more suitable match : and, though the Marchioness is averse to having a daughter in law, in the same house with her, yet, she will hardly decline accepting this young lady : as she has the good fortune to be one of her few favourites.

I only wanted such a blow as this, to drive me into an abyss of misery : which made me silently invoke death to relieve me.—Wretched cares of mine !—Wretched hopes ! if this was to be their end ! If this match was agreeable to the Marchioness, how could it be supposed that her son would oppose the will of a mother, whom he had been so long cautious not to offend ; and for whom he had made me languish in suspense ? Should she like her daughter's proposal, and should he comply with her inclination, how could I survive a loss, the very anticipation of which,

racks

racks me so insupportably? Should I not be so happy as to marry the Count, which, three years ago, was the aim of all my operations, and the fatal cause of my present misery; why had I suffered so much in the world, and, at length, been pent up, as if I had no longer been in the land of the living? Nothing remained for me now, but some abrupt resolution. As I was under a necessity of sacrificing my passion to the sport of fortune, it would no longer avail me to endeavour to keep myself concealed: and, why need I scruple to expose my amorous fraud, if he should display his filial obedience, even at the expence of sacrificing his love? Should my first fear, of being discovered by the physician, be verified; and my second, more terrible one, of losing my lover, it was better, to save myself the shame of being detected in a lie, to betake myself to flight; though my flight would
ac-

acknowledge the superiority of my rival, and bury myself in some obscure corner of the world. But, wretch that I am, thought I, on a second reflection, how can I fly? Whither shall I go? What recourse can I have? What will the world say of me, who, now alive, now dead, now risen again, have given people room to suspect, that, through my bad conduct, I was afraid to support my existence?

In this conflict of thought, I was so bewildered, that I knew not what to resolve: and it ended, at length, in a flood of tears. Early, in the evening, Lady A—— set out for Palermo; and the Marchioness came into my room, to see how I did. I should not have had the courage to look her in the face, if I had not been stimulated, by curiosity, to read, in her countenance, the sentiments of her mind. From the gravity
of

of her manner, and the brevity of her stile, as they were customary with her, I could not infer that she had made any discovery. After she had left me, I asked the servant, if the Count's marriage was actually agreed upon? She gave me for answer, that she knew no more of the matter. than what she had told me: therefore, I was obliged to pass that night, likewise, in uncertainty, without finding the least abatement of my fears.

Had I still continued to feign myself sick, my anxiety would not have been at all relieved, by the prolongation of that artifice: for I should not have had an opportunity of speaking either with Don Cirillo, or Lord B——, but in the presence of some other person. I, therefore, got up, next morning, and waited upon the Marchioness, according to custom, who had risen some time before,

before. She rejoiced to see me on foot again: but she held a discourse with me, on that occasion, which, without clearing up my doubts, augmented, very much, my confusion. I am heartily glad, said she, that you are better than you were: but I was extremely sorry you were so indisposed, yesterday, that you could not see my daughter; who had a great desire to be acquainted with you. The physician, who was with you, raised in her this curiosity: for he said, before all my company, that you so much resembled Rosara, the famous dancer, who was formerly at Palermo; and whom my daughter was so fond of, that any one would have taken you for the same, who had not known she was dead. I thought I should have dropped down, on hearing these words; and nothing kept^m me upon my feet, but a desire to hear the rest; that when she had done speaking, I might fall down
before

before her, and ask her forgiveness,—the only resource which now remained for me.—You cannot imagine how desirous my daughter was to see you, from that remark of the physician. Her head is full of nothing but such trifles: whereas, I am ashamed to mention the names of such people, who barter their honour to gain themselves a livelihood: and, if I thought you resembled that girl, in the least, I should love you less than I do, that I might not profane humanity. Such is my daughter's turn; and let her follow it: it is no longer incumbent upon me to govern her.—Hence it comes, that she begged of me to send you to her house, that you may spend a day with her, as soon as you are able to make a little journey, of two miles. I have promised to comply with her humour: and I intend you shall go thither, in a few days, to gratify her whimsical curiosity.

Her

Her speech being over, she retired into another chamber; a certain sign that she wanted nothing more with me: and, I will leave any one to imagine how I was thunderstruck with this unexpected discourse. It was now beyond a doubt, that the physician had known me: that he had told it to all the house; and, that much conversation had passed on this resemblance of mine. But it was not clear that the Marchioness thought I had deceived her: for the terms, in which she talked to me, were so equivocal, that no certainty could be drawn from them. I was now more perplexed; in more despair than ever. I knew not what course to take. To go, and visit Lady A —, was, I thought, the least evil that threatened me, in my present circumstances. At the worst, I might confess to her the truth; and beg of her to keep me with her; and screen me from the resentment

sentment of her mother. But, as to the marriage of the Count, which tormented me much more, how could I ward off that? And, what obstacle could I throw in its way, supposing I should even make Lady A—— acquainted with my whole situation? I longed to have some more light into this dark affair, from Lord B——, or Don Cirillo; but I had a good while to wait: and, at length, I found an opportunity of speaking to them both together. But, after I had spoken to them, I only knew as much as before: for, the Count maintained, that his mother was informed of the whole matter: and, Don Cirillo asserted, that she believed, indeed, I resembled Rosara, in my features; but that, she did not think I was the same person. We all agreed, that the sentiments of the Marchioness were inaccessible: our meeting afforded us no materials, to form a determined resolution.

tion. They told me, that my intended visit to Lady A—— could have nothing mysterious couched under it: for, that they had heard her desire the Marchioness to send me. They both agreed, that the best course I could take, would be, to throw myself upon her protection; and beg her to be silent: nay, to strengthen our artifice, by asserting to her mother, that the physician had been mistaken; and, that there was only a very faint resemblance between Rosara, the dancer, and me. Not that they imagined this project would serve us for any long time; but, in the present exigence, they saw nothing better. And they proposed to take more sure, and lasting measures, at Lady A——'s, where we were all three to meet in council, the day after the morrow.

I did not find myself, by all these precautions, more easy than I was before:

fore: though, for the two following days, I had not the least reason, from the Marchioness's behaviour, to dread any disaster. If I may say I ever had liberty to converse with Don Cirillo, and with the Count, it was on those two days, which preceded my visit, to the Countess, his sister. During that interval, the Marchioness kept herself more retired than usual; and was buried in something, which altogether engrossed her. Her inattention to us, for that time, seemed a strong symptom in our favour: and showed, that she had no suspicion of our secret: neither did she urge the Count to accept of the match proposed to him; another strong argument, that she did not suppose he had a passion for any other woman; or wanted to deviate from filial obedience.— Thus we flattered ourselves, that our fears were vain; without reflecting, that the Marchioness was more political than we

we : for she had long experience on her side ; and we were only in the flower of youth, and the warmth of passion. Two days after, I was made sensible of our deception : and, if my lover had seen the great impending blow, I am certain he would have prevented it, even at the expence of sacrificing that political regard, which had often made him put me to so much pain.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Rosara separated from her Lover, by a strange Adventure, her Distress, alleviated by her Fellow-traveller.

THE day before I was to go to Palermo, the Marchioness went out, and did not return till it was late. This was so uncommon a thing with her, that it ought to have given us some suspicion: but, how could we ever have dreamed of what was to happen, as we had not the least previous notice of it? Instead of troubling ourselves with conjectures on what her ladyship was about, we thought of nothing, but availing ourselves of her absence, by enjoying each others company, and talking over our affairs. My lover instructed me how I should be-
have

have to his sister, the next day, that I might bring her over to our party. Don Cirillo, likewise gave me a good deal of advice upon that head: but I neither needed the counsel of the one, nor the other: for as it would not be the first time I had conversed with the Countess, I was pretty sure I knew her character much better than they; and, consequently, in what strain I should court her good graces.

Vain were our precautions! They did not penetrate the future! The close reserve of the Marchioness; her deep dissimulation; the events of the preceding days, and her present absence, were all circumstances, which ought to have opened our eyes upon her conduct; yet we kept them stupidly shut against what was to happen; and were lost in the dreams of imprudence. If I erred on this occasion, I had this for
my

my comfort, that I did not err alone.— But why should the miserable think it an actual relief to have many companions in misfortune? Taking pleasure at having others in the same distress with ourselves, appears to me, to proceed rather from an envy of our neighbour's welfare, than from a feeling of our own calamity. I know, that when I afterwards upbraided myself with my blindness, my not having communicated to my lover some confused melancholy presages I had had, gave me more pain than the thoughts of any thing I might suffer. Had I fully seconded my melancholy presentments, perhaps, I should have made him more cautious: or, if I must have been unfortunate, I should not have been oppressed with the additional grief of having him to blame for my misery.

When the Marchioness returned home in the evening, she asked me, as soon as she saw me, how I felt my strength; and if, I thought I should be able to make a visit to her daughter in the morning, according to her desire. I told her I was ready to do as she thought proper: and, therefore, it was determined that I should set off for Palermo early the next day, accompanied by her Major-domo, a man advanced in years, of polite manners, of primitive morals, and, on that account, adored in the family, in which he had grown old. She put those questions to me while she was at supper, with Don Cirillo, and the Count her son; who took the favourable opportunity to acquaint her that they themselves intended to surprize Lady A——, with a visit in the evening. The Marchioness only at first answered them, What, will you then leave me alone?—But, as
if

if she had immediately repented that she had said so, go, however, go, added she, in God's name; but, remember my son, I charge you to make a visit, at the same time, to Lady N——'s daughter; and assure her from me, that I will comply with her proposals.

I was thunderstruck with these words; as I knew that the lady whom the Marchioness mentioned, was the same who had been talked of as a wife for Lord B——: and I now concluded from the Marchioness's words, that she had been settling the matrimonial preliminaries with the young lady, and her friends, that very day. My soul was perplexed, and rent asunder, with hope and fear. I immediately stole a look of anguish on Lord B——, which he returned with a gracious, and assuring smile: and having told his mother, that if he had a moment to spare, he

would certainly wait upon the lady, the conversation ended there; for it was now time to go to bed; where I could not sleep a wink; so tormented was I with a thousand galling reflections. I, therefore, got up early, and dressed myself in my best cloaths; for the Marchioness had provided me with whatever I wanted; and I was no sooner dressed than the Major-Domo came to me, and told me, he had orders to go with me as soon as I was ready.

The Marchioness's country-seat was only betwixt two and three miles from Palermo. I stepped with the Major-Domo into a post-chariot, which was darkened all round, excepting the light which we received from the little glass behind. The horses went on at a good pace: and my companion amused me with a variety of stories. But we were
never

never like to get to Palermo; and that delay began to make me apprehend some design: I dissembled my fears, however, as well as I could: but observing at length, that we had spent many hours in our journey; and that the sun was far advanced in his course, I could hold out no longer. What does this mean, said I to the Major-Domo? Whither are you taking me; and when shall we get to the end of these tedious three miles? Have patience, madam, answered he, have patience; and do not give yourself the least uneasiness; for you are in the company of an honest man, from whom you need fear no injury neither to your purse, nor your honour. That I very well know, answered I, weeping; and and I should not think myself completely wretched, unless I wanted your assistance. For heaven's sake, sir, if my age, my situation, my tears, can

make you compassionate me, explain to me, I beseech you, this mystery; and then I am even ready to die, if the Marchioness requires it.

No, my dear girl, answered he, looking at me, with great emotion, my lady bears not a resentment of that kind against you; and if she did, I would sooner sacrifice my own life, than execute her purpose. You are very sensible, I hope, that I am not at all culpable for her caprice: and yet, some time or other, perhaps, the Count her son may punish me for her fault. If your intreaties should ever have any influence with him, be, at least, a witness for me, of the manner in which I now speak to you, and of the honour with which I will treat you even at the hazard of my life. Her ladyship, I know not from what grounds, has formed suspicions that her son is enamoured

moured of you; that you are the dancer who was at Palermo, about three years ago; and for whom, it was spread abroad, that he had a particular kindness: and that, he even intends to marry you one day, as she concludes he has firmly promised you. Urged by this jealousy, which she has only communicated to me by halves, she ordered me to conduct you to a certain solitary house, which is situated in the remotest corner of Sicily. I have, likewise, orders to an old lady who lives in that house, a friend, and dependant of my lady, and who is to take care of you, to let no person get the least intimation where you are. I know that I am hurting the apple of my master's eye; and nothing can be more disagreeable to me, than to be instrumental in giving you even so much pain. But, dearest madam, what could I do? And what could you have done, if you

had been in my circumstances? Would to God, that I had had but time enough to acquaint my master with the commission, which his mother gave me; that if he had thought proper he might have taken measures to prevent the execution of it. I did not receive my instructions till this morning at break of day, and the Marchioness never lost sight of me afterwards, as she was afraid, perhaps, that I would disclose her commands, before I fulfilled them. If you can think of any expedient agreeable to yourself, and such as will be approved by the Count my master, impart it to me freely: for his sake, and for yours, I am ready to sacrifice my subsistence. Thus far I have obeyed the Marchioness; because I knew not what else to do. It pierces me to the soul to see you so afflicted, and to think how the Count will be shocked

shocked, when he finds you are missing. In consequence of this sudden stroke, I foresee, disorders in the family which make me wish to be no longer a member of it. I have known the Marchioness in better days: I was with her, when both her sons were born, who are not in the least like her; particularly the Count, your friend; who, if ever he comes to be master of the family, will, I dare say, reward my long, domestic services better than by charges of this kind: for my nature is compassionate; and I have great allowances for tender connections. The Marchioness would be a spiritualized being before her time; and yet I know her very well.—In short, we are all flesh and blood; and, therefore, we are all frail. Cheer up then, and command me: for, as I alone am intrusted with my mistress's orders, I shall not scruple

to transgress them to do you a piece of service.

I was enchanted with this discourse; and my extreme despair was immediately changed into the most lively hope. The Marchioness's orders did not at all surprize me: for on revolving what had passed, I found that all her actions of the preceding days, corresponded with them. What! should I go, and shut myself up in a retreat, and put myself in the hands of people whom I knew nothing of, when, at the same time, God knows how they were ordered to treat me. No: that I was determined never to consent to: and if the offers of the Major-Domo had not relieved me, I found myself capable of the most desperate resolution. What right had the Marchioness over my liberty that she should presume to condemn

demn me, perhaps, to a perpetual prison? For it was possible that I might not find means to escape from it. If I had deceived her, she might blame her son for it; nay, she might blame herself; as her own extravagant humour had obliged us to impose upon her. However, my present resolution had not even the shadow of any thing culpable in it; for my honour, and my safety were at stake. If she would not accept of me for a wife to her son, it was not reasonable that I should be condemned to imprisonment upon that account; and to die an untimely death: —to die,—perhaps, of despair.

Having communicated all these reflections to my worthy companion, I thanked him for his generous offer; and told him I would always regard him as a father. I laid my character
before

before him in as warm and interesting a manner as I could ; I observed to him that though I had been obliged to be very cautious, and humble of late ; yet I had not lost my sensibility, and my spirit. I unfolded to him the whole story of our love ; I assured him of my utmost gratitude, and of the Count's kindest protection ; who, we might conclude from the course of nature, would survive his mother. I told him, I thought myself extremely happy that I had fallen into his hands, when a plot was formed against my liberty : though, at the same time, I gave him to understand that if he had been of a different disposition, I would have run any risk ; I would have made the most desperate resistance to avoid a forced separation from my lover ; and an unjust confinement. The Major-Domo was not, indeed, of a very formidable age : but the
the

the mildness, and integrity of his character, made any threat superfluous. I was going, then, to supplicate him to persevere in his humane intentions for my good, but in the moment, the chariot stopped; and my fear that we had arrived at the place where I dreaded to be, instantaneously changed the train of my ideas.

C H A P.

C H A P. XIII.

The Major-Domo falls upon an Expedient for Rosara's Safety.———

*He recommends her to his Daughter ;
and they part.*

WE have now, said the Major-Domo, got to the stage, where I was ordered to leave our own horses, to wait for me, on my return ; and to conduct you with post-horses to the place of your retirement. We will now alight here, if you please : we shall have time enough to talk over matters ; as you must stay here all night, to take a little rest : for, we have travelled many miles to-day.

After we had gone into the inn, he gave the necessary directions to the coach-

coach-man; and bade the people of the house get ready our supper. He, likewise, ordered them to have the post-horses, in the morning, ready for our departure. These preliminaries being settled, he came into my apartment.

—Here I am, said he, at your disposal, willing to consult with you, and to take any measures with you, that may be consistent with my honour, productive of your satisfaction, and, agreeable to the will of my master; which ought to be much better known to you than me. What course can we take, answered I: for, the more I consider what we should do, the more I am bewildered? I am determined upon one thing,—by no means to consent to my imprisonment;—not from a licentious love of liberty, and dissipation; but from a rational regard to my security, and ease. If I am in the hands of the Marchioness's dependents, I must
lay

lay my accounts for ill treatment. If, indeed, I might shut myself up with indifferent people, with people who knew nothing of my adventures, I should gladly sequester myself with them, that I might reserve myself for the Count, without giving him the least motive to suspect my fidelity. As I cannot do this (for whither shall I betake myself, without the necessary means of support?) it must be your part to decide my destiny : for, as you have generously offered me your assistance, you will undoubtedly find out a way to give it me, without any danger to yourself.

As to the way, replied the Major-Domo, I am not in the least embarrassed about it : for I can always clear myself, by pretending, that you escaped from me, upon the road : and, I can easily contrive a little story, to colour your flight. But, when I leave you at
your

your liberty, where shall I leave you, my dear girl; in whose protection can I assure myself, that you will be free from harm? For, you may easily imagine, to what a severe account Lord B—— would call me, if any bad accident should befall you, through my negligence, or mistake. As for your support, you need be under no restraint upon that score: for, I have as much money upon me, at present, as will subsist you till the Count sends you more: but then, I still repeat it, whither will you go alone; and, if I should accompany you to the place where you may chuse to reside for the present, is not there a great hazard, that the Marchioness will find I have betrayed her, in the important trust, which she committed to my charge?—Stay, stay! he here subjoined, fixing his eyes upon the wainscot, and rubbing his brow,—I now recollect, that I lately received a
letter,

letter, from my daughter's husband, an inhabitant of Leghorn. His letter was dated from Messina, where he arrived last week, upon business, and intended to return, this week, on board the same vessel, in which he came. Now, what a lucky hit would it be, if, by riding post to Messina, we should yet find him there, to take you with him to Leghorn, where, with a letter of recommendation from me, to my daughter, I should think you as well fixed, under her roof, as with your own sister, or with myself! Yes, we will find him, answered I, impatient to execute a project, which seemed suggested to him, by Heaven, for my safety. Yes, we will find him, if we fly thither, without losing time: and, that we may not lose a moment, let us set off, if you please, this very night: I should be very glad if you would: the night-air, I am certain, will not do me the least harm.—Since
you

you go into the scheme so readily, replied he, I shall be far from retracting my offer ; and, we should be no losers, even suppose we should make the journey, without accomplishing our aim ; since, in that case, we might fall upon some other plan, for your security, after we get to Messina. Compose yourself, therefore ; and, if you can, let me advise you to take a nap, before supper. In the mean time, I will go and prepare matters for our departure : the mystery of which, you and I, alone, ought to know.

Having spoken thus, he went to arrange matters accordingly : but the grand affair we had in hand, too much actuated my mind, to admit the stillness and insensibility of repose. By the provident assistance of this worthy man, I thought I was restored from death to life : and even, upon this occasion, I
could

could not help remarking the whimsical turns of fortune, who, by the very act which seemed to threaten my ruin, was preparing, and opening for me a refuge from distress. My heart was warmed with gratitude for my deliverer. I was resolved never to forget his service, and to write an account of it to Lord B—, and to make him, and his daughter, sensible, 'if I should ever have it in my power to reward my protectors, that their favours had been well bestowed.

Supper was at last set upon the table, with all the neatness that could be expected, in a mean, unpolished place. Here, too, I had an opportunity of remarking the good heart of the Major Domo; who, as if he foresaw, that I was one day to be his mistress, absolutely refused to sit down with me: however, I at last prevailed upon him to take a chair, by observing, that his cere-

ceremonious behaviour might give some improper suspicions to the people about us. Supper being ended, and the highest praises of Lord B —, with the repast; for the good old man had the strongest affection for him; though, in the Marchioness's presence, he tempered it with the phlegm of prudence: — Supper, I say, being over, he ordered the coachman, before me, not to stir from thence, till he returned: and told him, that he would be back in four days, at the latest: then, post horses being put to the chariot, we took the road for Messina; without, however, letting the post-boy know, that we intended to go thither. We arrived there early next day: and, as my good luck would have it, the Major-Domo's son-in-law was not yet gone; but intended to sail that very night, for Leghorn, if the wind should be favourable, as it seemed then to promise.

The

The good old man soon came to the point with him ; and, telling him only as much of what had happened as was necessary, recommended my person to his care, in the name of the Count, his master, whom he knew, and gave him a letter for his daughter, in which he pressed her, in the strongest terms, to treat me with the most respectful hospitality. He afterwards took me apart, and put a purse of sixty zecchins into my hand ; observing to me, that I should stand in need of that sum at present ; especially for cloaths, of which I was unprovided ; and that he would take care to put the Count in mind, to supply me with money for the future. I gave him a long letter for Lord B—, with an exact information of the whole fact, and with the highest praise of my deliverer : nor did I omit conjuring him to be mindful of our love, and to write to me soon. At last we parted, some
time

time after midnight : for the ship was then going to set sail for Leghorn ; and he returned to the place where his lady's coachman was waiting for him.

I shall say nothing of my voyage, which was very favourable ; nor of the reception I met with from the daughter of the Major-Domo, whom I shall beg leave to call Placidia, as I think myself obliged to conceal her real name, for many good reasons. I found her a young woman, of about five and twenty years of age, possessed of her father's generous disposition, and obliging manners. She was handsome enough to please her husband, had he not been fickle, and fond of novelty. She had no children ; the cause of which, she attributed to his want of affection for her. He treated her, however, extremely well, if a wife can be said to be well treated, who wants the heart of her husband.

husband. I had not been a day in her house, before she opened her mind to me, in complaints of this nature. In this frankness, she honoured me with a confidence, which I never abused : but, at the same time, she let me clearly into her foible : I mean, a childish jealousy ; which estranges mens affections from us, while, perhaps, we fancy it endears us to them. After I had discovered this weakness in her, I was determined to be very tender to it ; and, as her husband was very indifferent to me, not to give her the least grounds to suspect the contrary. I had seen nothing before of Raimondo's gallantry (so I will call her husband) for he had behaved to me with the strictest decorum. Placidia, however, was extremely jealous of him : and, if I had not brought her father's credentials along with me, she would have been obstinately assured, that I was a rival of hers, come to triumph over her

her misfortune in her own house. As she was informed that I was so closely connected with Lord B——, and that he supplied my expences, I hoped she would entertain no fears of me. I might, likewise, add, the preventive declarations I made her, on the subject of love, on purpose to secure her friendship; yet, all these precautions did not avail: she harboured, notwithstanding, the weakest and most tormenting suspicions of me; as will be seen in the sequel.

In the mean time, I imagined to myself, the arrival of the Major-Dormo, at Palermo: but, I could not think how he would account for my flight, to the Marchioness, so as to acquit himself. I was afterwards informed, that she gave herself no great pain about it; and that she was satisfied as I was at a distance. She fancied, I suppose, that her son's

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passion for me would die away, when I was a little time out of his reach : but this was a very weak and superficial conclusion. Love, in vulgar minds, (if vulgar minds can be said to love) undoubtedly diminishes, and vanishes, by absence ; but, the same cause gives it a ten-fold force, in the bosoms of the generous, and sentimental. I was equally curious to know how the Count, and the whole family, were affected with my unlooked-for expedition. I thought he would certainly lose his temper, at this rude blow, and, perhaps, offend his mother so much, as to lose the rich inheritance, which was the real tyrant of his will. I was well assured, that the Major-Domo would reveal to him, and him alone, the place of my retreat. The passage from Palermo, to Leghorn, is not like an American voyage ; and, therefore, I expected a letter from him every moment : but, I knew not what had

had happened at the Marchioness's : and, I might have long expected to hear from him in vain, if fortune had not again played the coquette with me ; and, while she was chilling me almost to death with her frowns, given me a benign look, smiled, and cheered me.

C H A P. IV.

News from Palermo.—Character of Rosara's Landlady.—A new Accident obliges Rosara to leave Leghorn.

A Fortnight passed, and I had no news from Palermo: but, at length, a letter came, addressed to me, inclosed in one to Placidia. I immediately saw the hand was not Lord B—'s; and that circumstance very much discomposed me. I opened it hastily, and in a tremour; my heart foreboding me some misfortune.—It was from the Major-Domo; and, to this effect.

Madam,

‘ On my arrival at Palermo, I found it
‘ no difficult matter to make the Mar-
chioness

‘ chionefs believe, that you efcaped from
 ‘ me, with a company of comedians, who
 ‘ happened to be at the fame inn, with us,
 ‘ where we were obliged to lodge all
 ‘ night. Provided you are at a diftance
 ‘ from her fon, ſhe cares not much whe-
 ‘ ther you are confined, or at liberty :
 ‘ but the news I am going to give you,
 ‘ interefts her more deeply.

‘ When I got home, Lord B——,
 ‘ and Don Cirillo had fuddenly and
 ‘ privately gone off; they are not in
 ‘ Palermo; nor, indeed, I believe, in the
 ‘ whole ifland of Sicily : in ſhort, we
 ‘ cannot find where they are. I cannot
 ‘ exprefs the confternation I found my
 ‘ lady in, on account of their departure.
 ‘ I cannot help ſaying ſhe hath deſerved
 ‘ this torment; though it does not be-
 ‘ come me to criticife her conduct: and,
 ‘ indeed, ſhe is, at preſent, much to be
 ‘ pitied. My lord, when he found that

D 3

‘ you

' you returned not home in the evening,
 ' and that you had not been in Palermo,
 ' prepared for his departure that very
 ' night, and fled before break of day. I
 ' heartily wish he had, at least, waited for
 ' my return, as I could then have in-
 ' formed him where I had fixed you.—
 ' But, undoubtedly, he concluded, that I
 ' should be a meer tool of the Marchi-
 ' onesi, in that affair; and took this ab-
 ' rupt method of punishing us both. If
 ' ever his good fortune should bring you
 ' together, pray favour me with immedi-
 ' ate intelligence of that joyful meeting.
 ' I wish you all happiness, and beg you
 ' may command me, whenever you think
 ' I can serve you: for I am

' Your most faithful and respectful

' Firaldo.'

This

This letter perplexed me extremely. I was now ignorant where my lover was : and it was out of my power to give him any intelligence concerning myself. I could not expect to see him again, but by a very improbable chance. I reaped, however, some consolation, from reflecting, that, as he was not now with his mother, she could not be incessantly tormenting him to marry; and, consequently, I should run a less risk of losing him for ever. I was now in a house where I had all conveniences; though Placidia's jealousies of her husband, gave me great uneasiness. She grew so suspicious, and captious, in the space of two months, that I stood in need of all my prudence to keep us friends. As the greatest fires arise from the smallest sparks, her frenzy was lighted up, from a trifling accident, which deserved not the least attention, from a person of common sense.

One day, when I was at table with her, and her husband, after I had been about a month in the house, I asked him how much I should pay him for my entertainment, during the month past, and for every month I might stay with him. I mentioned this article meerly because I thought it was proper to have it fixed. He answered, with his usual complaisance, that he had never proposed a sum on such a footing before ; and, therefore, begged me to wave the matter, at present : for, that he should settle it with Lord B—— when he had the honour to see him. This little circumstance inflamed the jealous temper of his poor wife, and filled her mind with a thousand suspicions. It is true, I convinced her of my innocence : but, though it was easy to appease her, it was difficult to make her persevere in her tranquillity : for, she was as unstable, and fluctuating, as the sea ; which
is

is impelled, one way or another, by every wind. Scarce a day passed, without some disturbance in the family:—my very looks, and sighs, were liable to a severe censure. My sadness, and my mirth, were equally subject to sinister interpretations, from her whimsical suspicions.—My silence was dangerous: for I was culpable for it at her tribunal.—If I inadvertently complained to her husband, of the hardships I laboured under, it put him into a violent passion; and his vindication of me, hurt him still more, in his wife's opinion. A raw, unexperienced girl, would have ill brooked so wearisome a life; much more did I, who had been accustomed to public and genteel life; and had never been teized before, with such ridiculous weakneſſes.

I would rather have chosen to live in a desert, amongst lions and bears, than

with a person who stunned me, from morning to night, with these childish complaints. She always put such false constructions on her husband's conduct, that I never ventured out of the house when he was abroad: for, if we had been both out of her sight at once, she would have sworn that we had made an assignation.

Notwithstanding all this, I was under a necessity of putting up quietly with her humour: for I could not remove till I had some news of Lord B——; and till he should think fit to dispose of me otherwise. It seemed impossible for me to receive any intelligence concerning him, as I was then situated; yet, fortune was not for falling out with me altogether; and, in her cruellest oppression of me, she seemed to give me some marks of her favour. I happened to be looking about me, one morning,
from

from a balcony of our house, to which I scarcely ever went : it was almost opposite to the post-house: when, on a sudden, I heard a noise of horses, and wheels, thereabouts. I turned about, and looked ; but, guess how I was thunder-struck, when I saw Lord B—— and Don Cirillo, in a calash, with their postilion mounting, and just going off! I cried aloud, either to make myself heard, or out of surprize only ;—but my cries were not heard : for, the postilion was now in the saddle, and drove on at such a pace, that, in a moment, I lost sight of my lover. What an unfortunate woman am I, I exclaimed, almost out of my wits——What an unfortunate woman am I! Lord B—— has been in Leghorn, and I knew nothing of it! Perhaps, he had but just arrived, and stopped only to change horses. But, perhaps, too, he has been here all night ; and I, wretch that

I am, knew nothing of it:—and he, probably, on his part, has as little known that I was so near him. Unhappy creature that I am, what course can I propose to take! Oh! that I knew whether he was going, that I might speedily fly after him! Flattered with these ideas, I called to one of the hostlers, who stood at the door, and asked him, who the two strangers were, that had just left the inn, and to what place they were going? He answered me rudely, in the stile of his profession, that he kept not a list of those, who went and came; and, therefore, could not satisfy my curiosity: but another, more civil than he, told me, he believed they were Neapolitians, and, that he had heard them say, they were travelling to Milan.

I wished myself a bird, on this intelligence, that I might fly after them, and
join

join them, when they were least expecting it. In the sweet dreams of fancy, I imagined to myself, what a transporting surprize it would be to Lord B——, if I could come upon him unawares. But how could I effect that idea.——A woman young, and alone—not for want of money; for I had what was necessary——not for want of spirits; for I could have atchieved a much more hardy enterprize:—but, for want of some gentleman for my companion, whom I could confide in, to skreen me from the dangers and calumny, to which we are subject, upon such occasions. The more I surveyed these difficulties, the more insurmountable I found them: and, consequently, the more I was galled. Insensible to every thing, but my agitation, I went to my landlord's room, to inform him of what had happened, without reflecting, that, if his wife should catch me there, we should have a great deal

deal of disturbance. I entered his apartment without ceremony. It was a ground-floor, below my own, where he used to receive people upon business. The reader will be surprised (for, I was fit to drop down, myself, at the unexpected sight) when I tell him, that I there found my old friend Mr. Marbell, receiving money from him! He set up a scream, when he first saw me, as if a ghost had appeared to him. I did not know, that he was then, with his company, at Leghorn; as I lived in a house where there was no talk either of plays or players; and where the mistress's tongue was chiefly employed in prating about her husband.

I was astonished, beyond measure, to meet him there: and I had a good deal of difficulty to persuade him, that I was flesh and blood, and not a spirit, come from the other world. To confirm

firm my assertions, however, I gave him a short account of my adventures; and he, at length, believed that I had never been out of the land of the living. After I had given him satisfactory intelligence of my self, he showed me the same tokens of a good heart, which I had always experienced in him. Our discourse falling on the affairs of the company, which was improving, notwithstanding it wanted me, he told me, he was just going to remove it to Milan, where he intended to spend the ensuing year. At the name of Milan, the affair came into my head, which had brought me into the room; and from which I had been diverted, by my great surprize. Lord B——, thought I within myself, is gone to Milan; and Mr. Marbell is, likewise, going to Milan with his Company. What a fortunate opportunity may I now have to follow my lover, without giving suspicion, to
any

any one, of my design; and, without exposing myself to the slander of the world! I no sooner meditated the scheme, than I determined to embrace it. The gentleman, with whom I lived, had not the least power over my liberty; and, therefore, could not oppose my resolution. His wife would naturally be glad to see the execution of it; as it would rid her of her jealousies. It was not to be feared, that Mr. Marbell would refuse to admit me again into his company; as he might hope that I should be of advantage to him, as before, I said to him, jocularly, that I would go to Milan with him, if he thought proper. I wish, answered he, you were as much in earnest, in your offer, as I should be to take you thither, for our mutual advantage.—I take you at your word, replied I: but I will not promise you to go upon the stage, till you and I have discoursed at large; and reflected

reflected a good deal together, upon that particular. As you think fit, rejoined he. And thus, with a very few words, we were again connected, after my accident, at Naples, had separated us, for about two years. Raimondo, though he had no right to oppose my departure, showed himself a good deal chagrined at it ; and imputed the cause of it to his wife ; because he knew not the real one. I informed the Major-Domo, at Palermo, of all these circumstances, by a letter ; desiring him not to let the intelligence I gave him, transpire to the Marchioness : and I was to set out, for Milan, with Mr. Marbell, three days after ; which seemed, to me, to be three years, through my great impatience to see my lover.

C H A P. IV.

*Rosara arrives at Milan : Character of
of a Person, whom she had not hitherto
known. He asperses Rosara.*

I AM now again engaged with a company of comedians, to whom I thought I should never return : a step I took from my own free choice ; in-
somuch, that I would even have desired them to admit me amongst them, if they had not been altogether inclined to receive me. Betwixt the cradle and the grave, there are many vicissitudes : and whilst we are in the world, we can never pronounce what our state may be, even within a few years, if we remain in it so long : because we are often obliged by our circumstances, to do that which we once believed we never should
have

have done: and we, likewise, often grow indifferent about objects which, we once pursued with eagerness. I did not, indeed, intend to go upon the stage again; and, with regard to that point, Mr. Marbell left me wholly at my liberty: for I made him fully acquainted with my situation: but if I had not found Lord B—— at Milan, and every other means of subsistence had failed me, what must I have done to live, and to make a decent figure in the world? I am of opinion, that Mr. Marbell flattered himself, he should draw me, by degrees, to his purpose: but, as he was a man of great experience, and well versed in the knowledge of the human heart, he did not make the least discovery of his aim to me; but left its success to the silent operation of time.

His

His company was almost the same, which had acted at Naples with great applause; and had now been a year at Leghorn. Part of the people, who composed it, had a friendship for me: part of them, too, being envious of my talents, were galled to think I should be amongst them again, to mortify them by an humbling comparison. To the latter, my adventures were subjects of derision, and satire: as to the former, who were well affected to me, they were matter of compassion, and praise. How was it possible to persuade my enemies, that for a year, and more, of my absence, I had led a life as retired, and austere, as the Marchioness required of her dependents? They were obstinately in the belief, that Lord B—— had kept me all the time, as his mistress, in some corner of Sicily; that he had, at length, grown tired of my person; and that I had
been

been thus obliged to have recourse to my old profession. Time would have convinced those censurers that they were mistaken; but, in the interim, I was exposed to their scandal; which grieved me excessively, in spite of all the consolation, and encouragement of Mr. Marbell. Among the rest, there was one Mr. Girandola, who persecuted me in a most violent manner; though I had never given him the least cause. This man was a very insignificant person, whose name was expressive of his character; that is to say, he was always in motion, always whirling about. Devoted to idleness; fond of novelty, of dissipation, of buffoonery and tattle. He passed the day in roving about, from one place to another; and thought he had done a good deal, when he had thus consumed it in doing nothing. He hunted after good cheer, with a peculiar avidity: and, when he was exhilarated

hilarated with sumptuous entertainment, he would not have scrupled, in his licentious gaiety, to asperse his father. Always full of business, without doing any thing; always taken up with gallantry, though, he enjoyed not the smiles of one mistress; always loud, but never convincing, he spent his whole time in meddling with other people's affairs; and he was always able to explain the most ambiguous words, or the most unaccountable conduct. This gentleman was a new acquisition to Mr. Marbell's company; and, on the road to Milan, I studied him carefully, and got sufficiently acquainted with him, to be upon my guard against him afterwards.

We arrived at Milan, eight days after we set out from Leghorn; and twelve days after I had seen Lord B—— passing through that place:
which

which accident I had not yet revealed to any body. In order to have the speediest intelligence of him, it was necessary for me to impart my mind to some person; and in that case, Mr. Marbell was the properest person for me to confide in. He promised to get me information as soon as possible, whether or no Lord B—— was in Milan: but, at the same time, put me in mind, that, as he was for concealing his travels from his mother, he had probably changed his name; and that, therefore, it would not be so easy to get an account of him. This was a prudent reflection: but to remedy the inconvenience, and attain my end, a third person was to be employed, who, having little business of his own, might make diligent enquiries after my lover, in the different quarters of Milan. There was not a fitter person for such a commission than Mr. Girandola; and it
was

was easy for Mr. Marbell to give it him, without letting him know, that I had any thing to do in it.

In fact, it was so determined, though, against my will. But necessity hath no law; and love, here, got the better of prudence. Mr. Girandola fortunately knew Lord B——, for he had seen him more than once at Naples, and at Palermo, where he had formerly acted; therefore, he might infallibly come at the truth. His natural malignity, and the suspicious commission given him, operating together, he whispered it about, that Lord B—— had thrown me off, as he was tired, with having me at his disposal for two years; and that I followed him in vain; for he would never more take any notice of me. When his tattles were reported to me, by good authority, I perceived I was in bad hands; and observed it to Mr. Marbell.

Marbell. He gave me for answer, that he thought it would be my best way to take no notice of Girandola's aspersions; but to wait patiently for some favourable turn of fortune, that might evince their falshood; that a man's reports were not worthy of my regard, who could unsay over a second bottle of wine, what he asserted over the first.

The plays were not yet begun in Milan before I knew for fact, that Lord B—— had been there under his real name, accompanied by Don Cirillo; who passed in the capacity of his secretary: but he was then gone. For, after a stay only of two days, he went on in his intended journey to Paris. I was so surprized with this news, that it was a long time before I could believe it. But so strong were the proofs which I received of its truth, that I was at

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last obliged to give credit to it: and I was inconsolable for many days. How desperate did my case appear! Hitherto I had flattered myself, that my lover was going in quest of his unhappy Rosara; but this prosecution of his route seemed to indicate that he wanted to meet me no more. I should not have scrupled to follow him, if it had not been for feminine decorum: but, besides that consideration, how could I think of going in quest of him, as I had not money to support me on the road, with the most rigid œconomy? Of the sixty zechins which the Major-Domo gave me, I had expended thirty, on decent apparel. With the remainder I had payed Mr. Marbell for my journey to Milan, and other daily expences which he was at, on my account; as it was not reasonable that he should be at any charges for me, when I brought him no emolument.

The

The thoughts of going to Paris being, therefore, laid aside, I was now to provide for my support, during the time I should find it proper to stay at Milan. Had I been disposed to return to the stage, there was no difficulty in that point. But I had now a great objection against that profession: for, I thought, if I should enter upon it again, I should still have less chance of ever being wife to Lord B——; which good fortune, I had lately so much reason to expect.

And yet in my difficult circumstances I was under a necessity of coming to some resolution. My female friends were every day urging me to return to the theatre; but, to his honour be it spoken, Mr. Marbell, as he saw my reluctance, never once desired me to turn player again; though, perhaps, he wished more that I should do so, than

any of the rest. I was, therefore, again in a state of the utmost perplexity, and confusion. It gave me great concern to see Mr. Marbell suffer any detriment which I could remedy: for his success at Milan did by no means answer his cost and expectations. Though no body directly blamed me, yet I thought every eye seemed to upbraid me with indiscretion. Nor was my vanity silent on the occasion: it suggested to my heart that it depended upon me to re-establish the credit of the whole company, and to spare myself the shame of being any incumbrance to others. I thought that the novelty, and surprize of seeing me unexpectedly upon the stage would rouse the attention of all Milan; and turn out much to our advantage. One while I suffered this self flattery to seduce me; another while I opposed it. Some days I passed in chusing, and refusing

fusing; but at length the necessity of maintaining myself without being a burden to others; and my despair at not receiving any account of him who should have taken most care of me, prevailed over every other consideration.

I was then again preparing to go upon the stage in the theatre of Milan; and the city was not advertised of my intended appearance. As soon as I entered upon the stage, the house asked one another who I was; and, I believe enough of my story was circulated that very night to make a novel. My natural genius for the stage made some impression from that first evening; but my reputation grew so considerable afterwards, that the affairs of the company took quite a different turn; and Mr. Marbell often thanked me for the service I did him. The applause

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with which I was favoured by the public made many people, desirous to know me ; some too, after they knew me, wished to do me friendly offices ; of which humane disposition I soon experienced the good effects.

Though my adventures had been represented in a light very disadvantageous to my honour, partly by elaborate censure, and partly by rash, inconsiderate praters ; yet, their criticisms on me as a moral agent, were silenced by their partiality for me as an actress ; and malice herself, became dumb in my favour. I must own, the truth ; my affliction for being separated from Lord B——, was a good deal abated by my theatrical triumphs ; though my fear, lest the new course I had taken might disoblige him, was yet a thorn in my heart. Glory hath such forcible charms that it renders us almost insensible to
every

every other passion ; when we have once tasted the sweets of fame, we naturally pursue it with more eagerness than before. Self-love is the root of all our passions ; and, therefore, it is no wonder that they are all subservient to it. For whatever object it chuses for it's favourite, to the acquisition of that object it engages the affections, the faculties, the soul.

CHAP. V.

*Rosara intends going to Paris. ———
Stories spread of Lord B——— :
and various attempts to impose upon
her.*

THOUGH my amorous inquietude, on account of my absence from Lord B——, was a good deal soothed, by the voice of applause; yet applause could not extinguish it, nor make me forget him. Taking it for granted, that he was at Paris, I wrote him a long letter thither, in which I informed him of the necessity I had been under of returning to my former profession; and begged his sentiments on that article. I wrote, at the same time, to my good friend

friend the Major-Domo, at Palermo, in which I acquainted him with the intelligence I had received of his master : for I concluded that he would know more about him than the Marchioness : as, by her splenetic humour, she had obliged him to leave her. I received a letter from him, a few days after, in answer to one I had sent him from Leghorn, in which he returned me his warmest thanks for that favour, and assured me of his inviolable secrecy, whenever I should be pleased to communicate any thing to him concerning myself, or my lover.

Whilst affairs were going on in this manner abroad, and I was waiting the issue of my patience, and diligence ; a domestic war arose in our house against me, which threatned me with much disturbance. Mr. Girandola, to whom the enquiry after Lord B—— had

been so safely committed, had, it seems, honoured my person with his particular attention; and, thinking me, perhaps, necessary to establish his fortune, intending, if he could, to make me his wife. He durst not urge his pretensions openly, on account of the great distance betwixt him and me, in our profession; and, by reason of my reputable connexions; which he saw increased every day. In certain tumultuous minds, cunning supplies the place of talents; and, to their cunning, is joined a hardy perseverance, which makes them stick to their purpose, and prognosticate to themselves success. The artful Girandola, presuming a little too hastily, that I was giving up all hopes of Lord B——'s love, desired, one day, to speak with me in private: and, taking a letter out of his pocket, which, he said, he had received from Paris, asked permission

mission to read it to me :—these were its contents.—

‘ My Dear Friend,

‘ I enquired for Lord B——, as you
 ‘ desired me : I found him with ease,
 ‘ and I have been in his company : for
 ‘ he lodges in the house of a lady who
 ‘ is my cousin ; and who gave me a
 ‘ larger account of him than I would have
 ‘ wished to know. This young girl,
 ‘ than whom France can hardly pro-
 ‘ duce one more beautiful, and amia-
 ‘ ble, suffered herself to be seduced by
 ‘ his flattery, and wiles : I assure you,
 ‘ he is no less charming, and engaging,
 ‘ than she. It seems, that he gave her
 ‘ strong and repeated promises of mar-
 ‘ riage ; though he now refuses to ful-
 ‘ fil them. My cousin’s connexions in
 ‘ this country, are so numerous,
 ‘ and important, that justice will in-
 ‘ fallibly be done her. It was but very

' lately that she had occasion to have
 ' recourse to extremity; because the
 ' Count was ready to marry her; nor was
 ' she, in any respect, unworthy of that
 ' honour. But he has unluckily re-
 ' ceived a letter from Milan, from an
 ' old mistress of his, which hath made
 ' him recede from his engagements. If
 ' you are acquainted with this woman,
 ' who, perhaps, put you upon your en-
 ' quiry, I beg you may dissuade her, as
 ' a man of honour, and my friend, from
 ' thinking to hinder this marriage, which
 ' will be effected, in spite of her en-
 ' deavours to the contrary, and very
 ' little to her credit. I beg you may
 ' make a profound secret of whatever I
 ' may communicate to you on this sub-
 ' ject. I have the greatest reliance on
 ' your fidelity, which I have often ex-
 ' perience, and I am

' Your most affectionate friend, &c."

"S— S—."

I cannot say, that the reading of this letter shocked me very much : for I did not entirely credit its authenticity. Girandola's character was so well known, that he could not cheat a person of any penetration. However, it alarmed me so much, that it did not give me time to consider the drift of the person who had shown it me. When he put his letter again into his pocket, he declared that he had showed it me only with a view to do me service : he, therefore, told me, as I might yet harbour some doubt about the fact, he would give me more ample and infallible proof of its truth. Hereupon, he took other letters out of his pocket, more particular with regard to Lord B——'s affair ; by which I found, likewise, that he was to go to Paris, in a few weeks, to be employed there, in the company of Italian comedians. He told me, he was sorry to leave Italy, his country ; but, as she

no longer distinguished people of merit, in the profession, his determination was just and laudable. Mr. Marbell could blame none but himself, if he lost such an actor: for he should have esteemed him more while he had him, and not have preferred people to him, whom he was capable of instructing. He thanked Heaven, he should soon be in a situation, which would make him envied by those, who, perhaps, now thought him an object of compassion. They should hear, in a little time, what France would say of him, and what he what he would say, in France, of them. He would, however, always retain the sincerest esteem for me: and he heartily wished, that I would, likewise, think of leaving the stupid company, and go to shine in the seat of a polite, and celebrated court: for he was certain, that all France would deem it an honour to have

have me amongst them; and, that he himself should be thanked, and rewarded, if he could only assure the Parisians that I would fix in their metropolis.

This was talking in the strain of a ridiculous fool; but, allowance being made for the ostentatious, fantastical vein, which ran through the speech, a great deal of it had the appearance of truth; and it seemed absurd to suppose that he had invented it. I was pretty clear, that he intended to go to Paris, at all events; for he gave Mr. Marbell warning next day, that he should leave him. Since he was then going to Paris, as I infallibly concluded, I did not think it improbable that he might have got the whole story he read me of Lord B——, from the people, with whom he was connected there. Thus, by degrees, I suffered myself to be imposed upon,

upon, by a vain fool, on whose veracity, in general, I had very little reliance: for, by the influence of self-love, we are apt to think reasonable and credible, whatever makes for our interest, or our pleasure. Instead, therefore, of absolutely rejecting the proposals, which he had made me, with all the art of which he was master, I was disposed to examine them, like a very prudent woman; and I was brought, by that blind step, to the brink of a very dangerous precipice. I asked Mr Girandola what unquestionable commissions he had from Paris, with regard to me?—and he frankly named a third person, unknown to me, who, if I would listen to the treaty, had authority to conclude it, and to furnish me with a sum necessary for so long a journey; as he had already supplied him. I thought, I could not do less than listen to an offer, which left
me

me at full liberty to refuse it if I thought fit. When fortune throws unexpected happiness in our way, we ought not to reject it, because it seems superior to any thing we have imagined, or hoped for, ourselves. My marriage to Lord B—— was, as yet, a distant good; a good, which I might be deprived of, by the Marchioness his mother; by my station; and, by the volatility of a heart, of which I heard such fatal accounts; though, indeed, they were not indubitable. In the company of Mr. Marbell, I could only hope for very moderate fortune, and such as was not to be compared with that which a court and a capital promised me. Objects which always attract a croud of heedless admirers. If the proposal Girandola made was founded upon truth, why should I not embrace it?—And how could I suppose that it was not founded

founded upon truth, when he offered to convince me of his sincerity, by facts, the day following? when I was convinced of it, by the good fortune which had befallen himself. If *he* was to be admitted into the Italian Company, at Paris, why might not I have the same good fortune; since the judgment of the world set us at so great a distance in the theatrical art?—Thus, a strong desire was insensibly raised in me, of going into France, in quest of satisfaction. I could not well determine, whether glory was my leading motive, in this intended enterprize, or, whether I was only prompted by love, to be near Lord B——; and, likewise, to hinder his marriage with his new favourite; providing the story of his French amour was not a fable. My private interview, with Mr. Girandola, terminated in mutual assurances to keep our affairs to ourselves: and he told me, at the same time,

time, that he would, the next day, without fail, introduce the gentleman to me, who was commissioned to send me to Paris, if I should resolve to go thither. I would not have said a syllable of this treaty, in the house, for all the world: for, if I had, I should certainly have drawn upon myself a thousand reproaches of levity, and ingratitude.— And yet, (who would believe it!) before the day was at an end, it was talked of, by our company, as an affair already determined. It soon reached Mr. Marbell's ears, who begged of me not to conceal the truth from him; as he could not put any great confidence in a piece of news that was dispersed by Mr. Girandola.

I could have torn him to pieces, if he had presented himself before me. What a strange manner of proceeding was it

it in him, to discover, first of all, himself, which he desired me to make a great secret of; and, in discovering it, to make me the principal agent, instead of himself! It was a truly theatrical intrigue; and, we must allow, that some comedians assume to themselves the privilege of lying, feigning, and acting inconsistently, even out of the play-house; perhaps, lest they should forget their trade.

I was enraged at his treatment of me; but it served as a rule to my conduct the next day. I dissembled my resentment against Girandola, that I might have an interview with the person he talked of. He kept, indeed his word with me; and presented to me, about noon, a well-dressed man, who showed me his commissions, in writing, and asked me what my expectations might be? I told him, that I could not immediately

mediately resolve him ; because it was necessary to think a little, that I might not injure myself in my demands. He gave me three days to consider the matter ; at the end of which time, he said, he would return, to hear my decisive answer. After this interview, the affair was darker to me than before : but, luckily for me, I was never too hasty to determine, in certain occurrences : and if, in this case, I had been rash, I should have had much cause to repent of my folly.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

The Schemes of a Player, to make Rosara his Wife.—News of Lord B—, and his Arrival in Milan.

THE secret intentions of Girandola were extremely intricate, and involved in a labyrinth; to the centre of which I should never have reached, had not he himself given me a clue which directed me through it's windings. Perhaps he imagined he had done the most of his work, and that what remained was of easy execution. Perhaps, too, he thought he should find me so credulous, and such a dupe to ambition, that I should chearfully prefer his project to whatever I had that was dearest to me in the world. However that was; with whatever chimeras
he

he flattered himself; he came to me before the prefixed three days were expired; and addressed me in this manner,—Do you know, madam, what has happened? Our mine is discovered, and I wish to Heaven it may not be sprung. It was at my tongue's end to answer him,—and who but yourself has discovered it?—But I checked myself, as I had promised Mr. Marbell to make no disturbance about the matter, and to keep his company as quiet as possible. It was clear, however, that Girandola expected such a rebuke: for he commented upon his news by observing that even the walls of our house had tongues; that Mr. Marbell had long ears; for he had spies on every word that we uttered; and that he knew whence the misfortune in our case proceeded: for he had certain information that Miss Florimella would
use

use her utmost endeavours to embarrass our project.

She was a girl of indifferent talents, but of very great presumption: who, before I came, used to represent characters which she was afterwards obliged to give up to me; and which, indeed, I had the good fortune to exhibit with more success. She (Girandola went on) stung to the quick at being obliged to yield to you, and at seeing you more applauded by the public than herself, has taken it into her head, out of a spirit of revenge, to get herself sent for to Paris, to make the world believe that she is of more consequence than you, and that this company has done her manifest injustice. Observe now, dearest madam, what tricks this devil has fallen upon to succeed in her arduous pretension. To the agent of the Parisian company of comedians, whom you saw, she,

she, has offered a hundred pistoles provided he will send her thither under your name. But what is more extraordinary, she has offered to marry me, and to make me master of all her effects, which are very considerable; though I should not like to acquire them by doing her a service at the expence of affronting you. I own the proposal has very strong attractives with me: not that I am greedy of money; for, thanks to Heaven, I can always gain it by my industry; but because I like the girl; and she has always been reserved, and shy with me: though her behaviour has been very frank, and affable to others, who are certainly my inferiors in merit. The hundred pistoles, likewise, offered to the agent, are a great temptation: but I need not think much about them; as I know he trusts me, and I may dispose of them as I please. In fact, my

dearest madam, an actor if he is married to a woman of merit, pushes his interest better in the company, and is of much more consequence. A woman, likewise, without a husband to make her respected, is subject to a thousand insults from people who make their own interest alone, the rule of their conduct; and when they have power, scorn all the laws of honour and humanity. Miss Florimella, therefore, is very right in thinking of a husband, to establish her in her profession. Do you think that if she had had one before, she would have yielded her rank to you in the company, notwithstanding your eminent merit? She acts very prudently in endeavouring to secure herself against a misfortune of that kind hereafter: and, as for myself, I assure you that her offer has some effect upon me; though it cannot make me retract the promise I made you.

What

What a pity it is, my dearest madam, that you and I were not born for each other! For if that was the case, I should laugh at all the world. But this is idle talk; and the most important point at present is for you to resolve concerning the proposal I made you: for in case you reject it, it is not my business to injure myself.

Perhaps he here expected that I should in my turn have offered to marry him: and doubtless in his whole stratagem he had this aim, upon a firm supposition, that I was abandoned by Lord B——, and, therefore, could have no more hopes from him. The poor mistaken Girandola never once dreamed that the desire to meet with Lord B—— was the grand motive that induced me to go to Paris; and that I would never put it out of my power to marry him. However, I only answered him

in general terms; and would not seem to understand what I did not like; although he had explained himself with sufficient perspicuity. Notwithstanding all my reserve, he concluded he had won me; and presently after unrumoured about the house that we were soon to be man and wife. Mr. Marbell never enquired of me into the truth of this circumstance; for he had penetration enough to see the falshood of the report without my assuring him of it. Indeed I was informed by him that the politic Girandola had been haranguing Miss Florimella in the same strain he used to me: and I collected from his intelligence that he was for marrying either the one or the other of us to procure himself a sustenance; and I saw he was cajoling both, in order to be the surer of catching one.

This

This was Mr. Marbell's opinion as well as my own : and the event proved that we were right in our conjecture. I told the agent of the Paris company for my fixed determination, that I would enter into no new engagement for the present year, as I had promised to stay with Mr. Marbell for that time. No sooner had I given this conclusive answer, than it was buzzed about that Miss Florimella, and Mr. Girandola's marriage was fully agreed upon ; and that they intended to go to France at the close of the season. The poor girl fell into the trap that was laid for me ; and one may say, that she fell into it with open eyes ; hurried on by her malevolence against me. When she was married, there was no more talk of Paris ; and a thousand unforeseen objections arose to blast that artificial treaty. The theatrical agent was found out to be a strolling player, who being gained

by Girandola with the promise of a little money, which was never paid him, took upon him the above-mentioned character to forward the scheme of his employer. Miss Florimella had not the pleasure of being revenged; and only got a bad husband for her pains. She was married to an extravagant man; who was profuse of her money; and she was not at liberty to prosecute her gallantry, which had formerly been gainful to her. Girandola alone had obtained his intension. He had now a support in his wife, who preserved him his employment in a company where she was not useless; and had some connexions that made her footing more sure. He lived at his ease, at his wife's expence; and gave himself little thought about a business which was always mangled in his hands. This was the fine office he would have done me, had not my good fortune stood

stood in his way. His manifest imposture in the fact, which I have just related, made me suspect that his letters, likewise, relating to Lord B——, were supposititious; and, therefore, my heart began to recover it's serenity; and all I wanted now was to know whether my lover was at Paris, as it had been reported.

The letter, which I had sent him about a fortnight ago, was inclosed by Mr. Marbell to a friend of his, who was to enquire for him, and deliver it to him in person. In a little time the wished for answer came; which informed me that Lord B——, was actually at Paris, and that my letter had been delivered to him: at the sight of which, he expressed incredible joy. By this news! I might have naturally expected some answer to console me, and that he would have laid his designs

before me : but I received none, neither that post, nor the next : and I was thence thrown into a new fit of despair. I fell into a gloomy train of reflection ; which made me conclude the letter that Girandola had shewn me, to be genuine. I was doubting whether I should repeat my entreaties, and dispatch another letter to Paris ; or punish the neglect of the Count by a slight in my turn ;——when on a sudden I heard a noise in the house, which seemed the voice of Mr. Marbell in a fit of amazement : and immediately after, he entered my chamber with Lord B——, and Don Cirillo on each hand ; at the sight of whom, I was like to swoon for joy.

I will leave the reader to imagine, not only mine, but our common transports on that occasion. We had a thousand things to say to each other ;
but

but so crouded were our imaginations, that we knew not with which to begin. A year had now elapsed since our unexpected separation at Palermo: and as they had only received some broken accounts of my adventures, and of the good offices done me by the Major-Domo, they were eager to hear my whole story. I was, likewise, very desirous to know from them, how they came to resolve on their sudden departure from Palermo; and where they had been in quest of me. Two long hours were taken up in satisfying our respective curiosity. I then found that Lord B——, to punish his mother for the injury she did him, in her treatment of me, determined, by the advice of Don Cirillo, to take a journey into France, without making the least discovery of the route he intended to take. I, likewise, found that having taken with him as much money as he could,

he went first to Rome, then to Leghorn, and afterwards to Milan; from whence he passed on to Paris, there to wait for some news of me from his Major-Domo, with whom he had left orders to make enquiry for me; but not to discover the place where he intended, in the mean time, to reside. The Major-Domo had dispatched him the letters I had written him from Leghorn, and Milan; but he only got them the day after he received the last I had sent him. On this repeated intelligence he was determined to come upon me by surprize. You now, then have him, my reader, in Milan; resolved not to stir from me till he makes me his wife; in spite even of his mother, provided he can succeed in a certain scheme which he is meditating. What that scheme was, he said he would communicate to me, when he had brought it to more maturity.

maturity. Our discourse consisted of many other agreeable particulars: but the hour drew nigh, when I was obliged to go to the theatre; and our conversation was put off to a more convenient season.

CHAP.

C H A P. VII.

Lord B——'s Project to marry Rosara in Spite of his Mother.—News from Paris to their Advantage.

IN a few days, our carnival plays were to be over; and Lord B——, did not chuse for his honour's sake, that I should follow that profession any longer. He thought my reasons were very sufficient for entering upon it again; and could not blame me for it; as he charged himself with the cause; or his mother, who might, certainly, have spared him that regret. When we came to the point of my leaving the theatre, I did not ask him how I should subsist: for that would have been offending him; but I asked him what figure I should make in the eyes of the world: for that

was

was talking like a woman of honour. Here he explained his intention to me, which was to dispose of the possessions he had in Sicily, independant of his mother; and to settle at Paris, where he had an aunt by his father's side, a very considerable lady at the French court, with whom he was a great favourite; and from whom, he had great expectations. I shall not, it is probable, said he, have the rich legacy which my mother has it in her power to leave me: but I shall be possessed of my dearest Rosara, without giving the world an opportunity to reproach me for having married her: for I can make her pass there for whatever person I please; nor shall it be then in my mother's power to deprive me of a happiness, the want of which, costs me so much torment every moment it is withheld from me. Let me be but moderately rich, provided I have satisfaction;

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tion; and enjoy a felicity in my youth, which grows blunter when we are more advanced in years.

These sentiments were too generous, not to call forth all my gratitude: but I, had, likewise, my heroic enthusiasm that spurred me on to emulate his disinterestedness. Whether it was justice, or ambition that operated in my heart, I was not for selling myself at the very dear price of an inheritance, which would so much improve the circumstances of my lover. No, sir, said I to him frequently, when we talked upon this subject; I will not have it said, that you lost so much to obtain so little. Why need you sacrifice your mother's dowry for me, when you already possess the best part of me,—my heart?—And what you now have, can never be taken from you: for I swear to you, if I am not yours, I shall never be any other

other person's. I should press this marriage more than you; not because it will make me great, but because it will make me happy; and yet I am willing to consume my youth in this pleasing expectation; and I should think it well consumed, even though I should not have the honour to be your wife till old age crept upon me; and though I should even then, have that honour only for a moment. Don't, sir, precipitate a resolution that might make you the talk of the world, and the jest of your enemies: your mother will not live for ever; my circumstances may take some favourable change: for I will keep myself faithfully for you in whatever station you think fit to place me, suppose you should even chuse to shut me up in a retreat, to put away from the memory of the world my past vicissitudes and render me in some degree worthy of your bounty.

I should have gone further on in this strain, but I perceived I gave him pain; and that I could not draw him off from his design of settling at Paris; especially as Don Cirillo backed it with his arguments. They both imagined that the Marchioness his mother would be so alarmed at the bare report of such a resolution, that she would gladly, and instantaneously go into his desires, that she would even offer to permit him to marry me rather than that he should come to such extremities, and desert her for ever. In fact she loved her son tenderly; though her austere character, made her seem superior to the weaknesses of a mother. She had a grandson the son of Lady A—— her daughter, of whom she was very fond; but he seemed not to be long-lived: for he was of a very weakly constitution; and it was not likely that her daughter would have any more children, as
she

she had not had any for many years. These reasons induced me to give way to their plan ; and I was, likewise, prevailed upon by another motive to let them chuse for me : for I was pretty certain that they had laid the foundation of their scheme at Paris ; and that Lord B——'s aunt had vouchsafed it her approbation.

Since it was so I was obliged to bow the head, and be silent ; especially as I was sure they would contrive every thing that would conduce to my satisfaction, and honour. In completing this agreeable project we passed whole days : though we were not altogether amused with the flowers of imagination : for we omitted no step that might further our design. Lord B—— at length launched the great stroke against Palermo, by sending a full commission to his sister's husband to sell his

his estate, and effects in Sicily, and to remit the money to his aunt in Paris, who already knew how to dispose of it.

His mother, on hearing this news, and finding that her son took no more notice of her than if she had been dead, lost all her gravity of demeanour, and stormed like a mad-woman. She asked the cause of this resolution, she asked where Lord B—— was, that she might write to him herself, and enquire it of him: but it was not in the power of the Count of A—— to resolve her; he imagined that he was, perhaps, at Paris, whither he was to write concerning the discharge of his trust; but the Major-Domo, who had secret instructions, and was informed of the truth, had positive orders not to reveal a syllable of the matter; and when the sale was made, to come and rejoin his master,

While

While we were impatiently expecting the issue of the commissions we had given in Sicily, my lover received a letter from the Marchioness of T—— his aunt, which brought the account of the death of her only son, and in which she intreated him to give her his company as soon as possible, as it would be a great consolation to her in her misfortune. She assured him that he should find so much of the mother in her, as would leave him no room to regret the severity of his own. Better news than this we could not have received in our present circumstances, had not decorum, and gratitude called for our grief on the occasion. We all agreed that we ought to comply with the desire of the lady, who, we had reason to expect, would act the part of a mother to us, and that we should immediately set out for Paris, without waiting for answers from Sicily. There
was

was no need for me to hint to Lord B—— to take me with him in this journey; for he proposed to do it of his own accord, and could not think of letting me suffer in his absence any more. I had a great desire to propose to him that he should marry me first of all; for then I should have been sure of him; and no capricious obstacle of fortune could have intervened betwixt us, and our union. A very delicate sense of honour prevented me from making this proposition. I thought I should hurt myself in the opinion of Lord B——, if I should shew more regard to my marriage than the enlargement of his fortune. I thought it was my duty to see his interest secured in the first place, and afterwards to think of my own. I thought that if he chose to marry me before we went to France, he would propose it to me himself. For these reasons I would not start the subject;

subject; but in a little time I wished I had conducted myself in a different manner.

In the mean time our plays were over at Milan; and I got my dismissal from Mr. Marbell privately to prevent the rattle of the publick. I had a mind to tell this great piece of news myself; not only to my friends, but to all my acquaintance; that at the same time I might have an opportunity of justifying my conduct, which would be differently interpreted according as people are differently affected towards me. During my residence of six months in Milan, I may say, I knew the flower of that city: for my profession introduced me to a general acquaintance. My social intercourse was very extensive; for I never thought there was any harm in keeping a good deal of company; but in forming a particular acquaintance

acquaintance I was always very wary : 'tis a choice in which we cannot be too circumspect. As my station in life obliged me to endeavour to have many well-wishers ; (for we stand in need of people to support our credit against malignant parties ;) for that reason I thought it my business to cultivate universal society, and not to stint myself barely to an acquaintance with the most finished characters. As I wished to be in the good graces of every body, it behoved me to give a kind reception even to some out-of-the-way originals, who had no other merit but that of entertaining one. The company who visited me daily consisted of a strange mixture, in which there were some characters truly ridiculous, and extravagant, whom I was obliged to bear with, that they might not be my enemies in a place where another woman of our company had a powerful party ; who
endeavoured

endeavoured to support her by disparaging my little talents to the utmost of their power.

I will, by and by, give an account of them one by one; and form separate characters of them, that their memory may live if they were my friends; and that shame may redound to them for being known by me, if they were my enemies. My equal, and free conversation with them was so far from doing me any prejudice, that it made me more esteemed than the other actresses. Lord B—— who would have been the first to frown on seeing a crowd of gay gentlemen so often around me, had there been any thing blameable in my conduct, never once found the least fault with me for it: as he was more desirous than any one else that I should be loved by all; and as he saw that I treated them all only with an impartial politeness,

politeness, my apartment was the resort of mirth, good manners, wit, and virtue : for we did not murder our time over cards, but it was spent in rational, and elegant conversation, from which I was always learning some secret movement of the human heart, and some artful concealment of the human passions. This was useful discourse ; for it taught me prudence. It is true, there were some persons of my acquaintance whom I esteemed more than others ; but that esteem I restrained to the confines of the heart : for I thought myself obliged to make an equal distribution of my external marks of respect ; otherwise, in gratifying two or three, I should have disobliged all the rest. All those who frequent public life ought to act in this manner ; but how many do quite the reverse ; and by their awkward, ignorant politeness disgust a world whom they would wish to have for their admirers.

mirers. When people of different fortunes are met in company, you see this difference of treatment, in the master of the house, in a most odious, and striking light. True politeness is founded upon reason, and propriety; therefore true politeness ought to cherish particularly the poorest man in company: for poverty is injured in this world, and timorous; wealth is shamefully idolized, and shamefully insolent. Yet these polished barbarians, who call themselves well-bred people, when they preside at their own tables, distribute their smiles with such a mercantile exactness, that one would imagine they just gave a guinea's worth of complaisance to each of their guests, for every guinea he possessed. Suppose a lubberly country-squire, or a lubberly lord, entertained at the same table, with a man of eminent genius, and virtue; whom, perhaps, it is one of the greatest

earthly honours to have under one's roof, each of whose sentiments is worth making a monument of; in short, one who is fit to be the legislator of mankind. Yet this man will probably only be treated with a cold civility; his brightest expressions will pass unnoticed:—whereas every motion of the gilded blockhead will be respectfully watched; every word that proceeds out of his mouth will pass for attic salt.

A man of parts cannot endure to frequent a house long where he finds the master, or mistress prejudiced, perhaps, in favour of a single person, whom he knows to be far inferior to himself. No body likes to appear only as a statue in company, except some good devil who cannot distinguish black from white; who, if he is admitted to a great person's table, fancies he is transported
to

to the third heaven; while at the same time he is only the butt of mortals. Of such animals there is always abundance to add units to the number of an assembly; but I think rather than to have one's house stuffed with such insipid beings it is better to keep it empty.

CHAP.

C H A P. VIII.

*Characters of many of Rasara's Visitants;
 —and her Manner of behaving to
 them.*

PERMIT me, gentle reader, to dedicate this Chapter to a number of my acquaintance, whose characters I beg leave to draw, that their different sentiments, on my prospect of a happy settlement, may be set in a clearer light.—These pictures will not be alike worthy of imitation, and praise: but, I have always heard it remarked, that, it is no less useful to know the good, in order to imitate it, than to be acquainted with the evil, that we may shun it, with caution, and safety. That evening, then,
 on

on which I published my determination to quit the stage, I had my house full of people ; who were, partly, the objects of my esteem, and, partly of my diversion. Amongst the rest, there was one Vanesio, of unknown, and, as it was reported, of illegitimate birth. He was a well-made man ; of a brown complexion ; his manners were stiff, and affected ; but, he was very presuming, and bold. He was for playing the gallant with me ; but, he had not those qualities, which are indispensibly requisite to make us agreeable. He was one of those phænomena in the civil atmosphere, whose brightness we cannot account for ; I mean, one of those, who live—we know not how ; and even live splendidly ; though they have neither estate, nor office, nor talents to procure them that affluence ; which, from their gaiety of dress, we may conjecture that they enjoy. Enthusiastically fond of

whatever was foreign, he talked of nothing but London, and Paris; as if those two capitols comprehended the whole world. In fact, he had resided for some time in each of these places: but I know not in what station, or with what fortune. London and Paris were always brought into his conversation: London and Paris were the models of his life, his dress, his studies; in a word,—of his follies. Always as trim as a Narcissus; always vain, and strutting, like a peacock; always whirling about like a wind-mill, he made it his daily business to intrude himself into every company; to be the gallant of every lady; to adapt himself to every circumstance that furnished him with the means of making money, or, of being fortunate in love. He was an alchymist, with the miser; a poet, with the ladies; a politician, with the minister: in short, he was all things, to all men.

men. But, in the opinion of the sensible, he made himself ridiculous by every metamorphosis. Volatile as the air, which infested his brain, he was, in one day, the sworn friend, and the implacable enemy, of the same person. After having commended my charms, and exalted me to the stars, he was capable of sinking me below all my sex, as soon as his back was turned. In fine, his rule was to be every body's guide; and, consequently, as the humours and affections of people are different, he could be a friend to no one.

He was a great companion, and dependant of Count Nebbiano; a person poor in fortune, but over-stocked with vanity; which had so obscured his moral optics, that he could neither see the merit of his neighbour, nor his own weakness. As his wife was a complete coquette, he had, by her art, a set of visitors,

were adapted to his own grotesque fancy; and made him conclude himself a person of very extraordinary consequence. Amongst his other empty pretensions to importance, he used to offer every body his patronage, which never had influence enough to recommend any one to a supper. In his poetical rants, he brought the most lofty projects upon the carpet; which were only extravagant chimeras, that existed no where, except in the ideal republic of Plato. When he set up for the man of letters, he wrote on, without digesting whatever came into his head; and, at the same time, fancied he was writing oracles. Indeed, his sentiments were so oracular, that, after they were thrown upon paper, he himself did not understand them. Vain of being singular, and extravagant, his opinions were always diametrically opposite to those of other people; his expressions, whether
in

in speaking, or writing, were bombastic, uncouth, and obscure; his conversation was abrupt, and inconsistent: he either brought no proofs of what he advanced, or he brought such as demonstrated exactly the opposite of what he wanted to evince. He had formed an academy of his wife's visitants, composed of heads exactly resembling his own; which contained not a grain of sense; though some of them were of an elephantine size. In virtue of the protection with which he had honoured me, all his dependents used to visit me; amongst whom, there were some yet more ridiculous; and more foolish than himself.

Septimius, his great confidant, had, first of all, been his stable-boy; and no body could perceive what quality had so much endeared him to his master; if it was not, that he was the trumpeter of his praises, in every corner of

Milan. The truth is, he spoke ill, as well as good of him: he published a minute account of his transaction; and told every body how much he was in the butcher's, and wine-merchant's debt for an entertainment he had given his friends: nay, how much advantage he had made himself, in buying the provisions. His most secret intentions were not safely lodged in this man's breast; and he, likewise, put such sinister interpretations upon them, that one was obliged to think him a fool, or his patron a villain; who, indeed, did not, to me, seem capable of all the iniquity, which he often attributed to him.

Another of those academicians was called *Tamburio*: and, indeed, if a pun will be pardoned me, he was as sonorous as a drum; for he was only voice. Had you heard him with me alone in a room, you would have imagined a regiment

regiment had been there; so obstreperous was he in his talk: and he always did talk, right or wrong; for he seemed fond of distinguishing himself by his loquacity. In order to avoid being stunned, I was obliged to give up the argument to him, and pronounce him in the right, though, perhaps, at the same time, he was advancing the most ridiculous absurdities. As he took my laughter for applause, and my silence for a submission to his conclusive eloquence, he took upon him to decide all the questions that were started by my company; and he decided them in so magisterial a tone, that, to argue with him any further, was both fruitless, and an attention which he did not deserve.

When I read a little, in my earlier years, and met with such characters in books, especially French ones, I thought

it was impossible that they could really exist in life ; and, I fancied they were only children of the imagination, invented purely to deck out romances. Experience hath convinced me of my error. I dare say, I have seen a hundred persons, who seemed copies of characters, in romance, when, in fact, they were originals, and subjects for the pencil of a novelist. Perhaps, characters like those, I am here drawing, may be found in other books ; of which I shall be very glad ; because it will be a proof that mine are not remote from probability, and nature. I have yet others, that will equally amuse the reader : but the small extent, which I allow these Memoirs, permits me only to give a short sketch of them.

Another of my visitants was a young lad, of very humble stature ; who, notwithstanding, was for raising himself into

to

to a Cato. He affected always to seem serious, tranquil, and immoveable. He used frequently to rub his forehead, as if it had been pregnant with a profound thought: he had his memory filled with title-pages, and common places: hence, he was always lugging into the conversation-books, which he had seen, and turned over; but he always showed, by his discourse, that he had not read the author he was talking of; or, at least, had not understood him. Another of my friends was a quack of a physician; who set up for a wit, and was always pelting the company with repartee. He pretended, likewise, to be an elegant epicure: and talked of nothing but the most delicate dishes, and delicate morsels; though he was a lively image of misery, and famine. Another of them was one Count Friobollo, a relation of the above-mentioned Count Nebbiano. This gentleman was
madly

madly in love with music. He went every where in quest of it ; and thought it was efficacious enough to reconcile the Emperor of China, and the Cam of Tartary.

These, and many others, all speaking trumpets of a great city, were assembled at my house, that evening, when I informed them of my intention to quit the stage, on which I had hitherto been employed, against my will. I here wish I was endowed with genius, and eloquence enough, that I might give a useful and philosophical lecture on the human heart ; and display the different strains, in which they complimented me ; while it was evident, that the tongues of many of them, in praising me, were at variance with their affection. The Count Nebbiano, my patron, as he chose to fancy himself, spoke his sentiments first. He said, he highly disap-

disapproved of my resolution; as it would be of great disadvantage to mankind; and rob the Italian stage of the true model of good taste, of moving eloquence, and of those magic powers, which were even strong enough to charm inanimate matter. I knew very well, that those high flown sentiments of his, were not sincere. He was fond of Miss Florimella: he had done every thing in his power to oppose me, and favour her, that she might not be obliged to yield the superiority to me: and he would have gone any lengths to re-establish her in her former rank. Perceiving that circumstances now favoured his desire, he was for making a merit of his disapprobations, and atoning to me for his past conduct. All his creatures were, necessarily, of his opinion; and hence, he, and his party, and those who were of opposite sentiments, had a long debate, whether I did right, or
wrong,

wrong, in giving up a profession, in which I had acquitted myself with so much honour.

This diversity of opinion redounded equally to my praise ; though it was not all dictated by sincerity. In one breath, they told me, I did wrong to quit a profession, in which I so much excelled ; in another, they approved of my leaving it off ; because nature had endowed me with talents for greater things ; and the stage was too narrow a sphere for me. Vanesio took his opportunity to throw in the history of other Actresses, whom he had known at London, and Paris. Septimius assured me of the approbation of the whole city, whose sentiments he had collected from house to house, that very day. Tamburio stunned us with his noise ; one while affirming, another while denying, without knowing the subject in question ;

question : for, he took it for granted, that I declined playing, only because I had got a cold. Monsieur le Petit, for so we called the grave young man, threw in his mite, likewise.—He said, he had seen a very curious edition of the *As* of Apuleius, in which my name was written ; from which he inferred, that the book had once been in my possession. In short, they were all eager to give their opinions ; and they supported them with a good deal of warmth. But, I no sooner opposed to their judgments, my reasons for the step I was taking, than they not only changed their minds, and approved it ; but, as if I could not have remembered what had passed a quarter of an hour before, they insisted, that they had, at first, thought I was right in my determination ;—that I had misunderstood them ;—and that they themselves would have
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advised me to do as I intended. Such is the presumption, the vanity, the deceit of the human heart : it gives two colours to the same object ; and would arrogantly justify its most glaring defects.

C H A P.

CHAP. IX.

Rosara is reduced, by a Fit of Sicknefs, to the Point of Death.—The Good that results to her from it.—News from Palermo.

MY only view in advertising my acquaintance of my intention to leave Milan, was, to escape their censure; as I well knew the truth of the proverb—That, the craziest wheel of the cart creeks most: and I flattered myself, they would spare my reputation, as I gave so much consequence to their opinions, and advice.—There I was not deceived: and, certainly, I was fortunate, in avoiding the calumny of people, who were destitute of the spirit of humanity.

humanity. As they had come over to my party, only to sail with the current; which flowed entirely in my favour, they were pleased to find, that they could pursue the same course, in paying court to me: for, the generality of them were not regulated by principle, but by mode, vanity, and interest. Miss Florimella had brought me acquainted with them all: she looked upon them all ennobled under her banners; and faithful to her cause; and she payed them with an exact distribution of her smiles, and favours. When they perceived that I had outrivalled her, in the esteem of the public, and driven her from the throne, they grew ashamed to follow the fortune of an unhappy queen, and came over to the victorious side, concluding, that they should meet with honourable terms, or, at least, a kind reception. My profession obliged me to pay respect to every body: not
because

because every one could be of service to me ; but, because the vilest, and most contemptible person might do me an injury. I waved my direct resentment against their past actions ; and endeavoured to show them, in my behaviour, that I was neither unforgiving, nor insensible. Miss Florimella, perhaps, did not observe this medium : perhaps, they, therefore, espoused her cause more cordially, and were now glad to ingratiate themselves with her, by a pretended good office. They told her, that I had quitted my business, by their advice ; which they had given me, that she might have an opportunity of recovering her throne, which I had ambitiously usurped. She had grown a [good deal more tractable than she was before : for, the bad conduct of her husband, Girandola, made her stand in need of every prop she could get, to support her. I became one of her best,
and

and dearest friends : for I now no longer excited her jealousy ; and her adorers now defended my resolution, and my love of Lord B—— ; though they were lately my bitter enemies. I had obtained my grand aim, which was, to stop their malevolent tongues ; and I cared little about the rest. In two days, the whole town was full of my change of situation ; and I had the pleasure to hear every body regret the loss of me ; though none presumed to blame the motives of my departure.

We expected to leave Milan, in a week, or ten days ; and we were waiting for answers to our letters, from Palermo ; which were to bring bills for Lord B——'s long journey to France, when I caught a fever, from a cold which I had neglected : and, in a few days, I was brought to the brink of the grave. Every physician of any note
in

in Milan, gave me his most diligent attendance; to which they were greatly induced, by the regard they had for me, and by the severe affliction of my lover. In proportion as my danger increased, his agony grew more extreme. For eleven days himself, and Don Cirillo, scarce ever left my bed-side; and I saw their sufferings for me were so accute, that they gave me almost as much pain as my disorder. For the most part of the time, I had my senses. It was long before the fever affected my head; and I was only delirious for a day. Thus, as I was not deprived of my reason, I was not so much alarmed at the thoughts of death, which then threatened me, as I was mortified, when I reflected, that I had suffered so much for Lord B——, and should not, at last, have the happiness to marry him. In my situation, indeed, it appeared but a chimerical happiness: and yet, I laid so much stress upon

upon it, that, I thought, if it was granted me, I could die with more satisfaction. This sentiment proceeded from my tenderness for Lord B——; and, likewise, from a principle of honour; which made me desirous of evincing to the world, the innocence of my past conduct. When I was most severely harassed with the disorder, I had this desire strong in my mind; but I durst not propose it, lest I should seem to distrust the fidelity of my lover, and wound my future peace, if I should survive my malady. When, amongst other causes of his grief, he expressed his sorrow, that I should be snatched off, in the flower of my age.—“That is not the circumstance, answered I, which makes me loth to leave the world.” I presumed not to say any more; for I wanted him to guess it; when, alas! he was incapable of recollection.

Though

Though I did not explain these words, yet, my frequent repetition of them, made him, at length, suspect their import: and, I was fit to die with joy, when, on the tenth day of my sickness, and before proper witnesses, he caused our marriage to be celebrated in my chamber. I scarce had breath to speak; and yet I thanked him so ardently, for his unexpected good, and professed my tenderness for him with such emotion and solemnity, that I melted the bystanders into tears. Those who have been hypocrites all their lives, are often ingenuous when they come to die;—their honesty, at that awful crisis, proceeding from their farewell indifference for the estimation of mankind;—their grave,—their strong, though unaffected eloquence, with which their situation inspires them,—and the tremendous journey, on which they are bound,—all make the scene extremely striking,

and pathetic. During the rest of the day, I repeatedly called for death, to ease me of my sufferings. I called for death, as the only means to make me die happy, in the delightful name of wife, to the man I adored, and to prevent my living tormented with the fear that Lord B—— would be ashamed of a wife, so unworthy of him by birth, however suitable to him—however endeared to him, by our mutual tenderness.

My words were so many daggers to his heart, and dissolved him in a flood of tears: but I could not avoid giving vent to my thoughts, with a veracity proportionable to the awfulness of the conjuncture; when one cannot lie, without madness, or the most confirmed impiety. The next day I passed in the most violent agitation; of which I was unconscious: for the fever had deprived

prived me of my senses; and I talked in my usual strain, without knowing what I said. The impressions of the mind have a very sensible effect upon the corporeal frame: and, it is said, that people have even died of sudden and violent joy. I am not philosopher enough to determine on subjects of this nature; but, I am fully persuaded, that my pleasure, in finding myself, at least, married to Lord B——, rescued me from death. For, after the delirium of that day, which, perhaps, was owing to the last despumption of the malignant humour, that fermented in my blood, I began so sensibly to recover, that, in two days, the physicians judged me out of danger. My lover attributed this favourable turn, to the vigour of youth, and their attention; but, I think, I rather ought to attribute it to his love; which, in uniting us, by wedlock, administered to me a most effectual cure.

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As our marriage was kept a secret, to prevent the volability of busy tongues, the physicians had all the credit of my recovery, and were largely recompensed for their trouble.

Let me be here permitted to make a short reflexion, which will justify the title to these Memoirs, and show how much I have been the creature of fortune. The good events that I have had in life, have always resulted to me from my calamities; as it may be constantly remarked. Who knows how much I might have suffered, before I had been sure of Lord B——, had not my dangerous illness hastened him to marry me, and prevented those delays, which he might have allowed himself, had I continued in perfect health? I shall soon come to a conclusion of this history of my life: but, in the little of it which remains, it will be clearly seen, that

that many obstacles would have intervened betwixt me, and the confirmation of my happiness, had it not been already secured.

During my sickness, letters came from Palermo, and two thousand pistoles for the Count, my husband: (for the future, I may give him that appellation :) and, about the same time, he received a letter from his aunt, at Paris, who pressed him to be with her, as soon as possible. Our departure was only delayed till I was perfectly recovered; and, in the mean time, I had the satisfaction to receive letters from the most respectable people in Milan, in which they expressed the sorrow they had felt for my dangerous indisposition, and their joy on hearing I was better. When, at length, we were to set off, within a day or two, a stranger arrived, who desired to speak with my husband; when,

quodlibet

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behold!

behold ! his Major-Domo, from Palermo, entered my room, where the Count then was ; and, after having surprised us a good deal with his unexpected presence, he surprised us yet more with the news of the old Marchioness's death. After her son had given way to the first transports of filial tenderness, the Major-Domo told us, that the unhappy lady, through self accusation, probably for her extravagancies, enjoyed not a moment's peace, after the unexpected departure of the Count ; but that her vanity had so much dominion over her, that she would not show, by her conduct, she had been guilty of an error ; and, therefore, gave herself up a prey to chagrin, without applying for any relief. This keen discontent, often fatal to the human constitution, but oftener fatal to a constitution worn with years, brought her imperceptibly to the grave. She died without

without any previous accute illness; without any distinct warning of her approaching change. She never mentioned her son; nor made any disposal of her estate: for, she said, she had time enough to think of bequeathing it, at her leisure.

The Count therefore, is now lawful possessor of his mother's dowry, though all appearances had threatened him with the loss of it, upon my account. I must own the truth, if this misfortune had befallen him, it would have rankled in my heart, and embittered all my satisfaction. It must always hurt a true-lover, to bring any disadvantage to the object loved: and, when we willingly sacrifice the good of another, to our own satisfaction, it must be allowed, that we passionately love ourselves. If women were as disinterested as they ought to be, in their connexions with

men, we should be less accused by the other sex than we are, of occasioning their ruin ; and they would not, for the faults of a few, give a shocking description of us all, in which we are more distinguished by our selfishness, than by our charms. We are so branded for want of generosity, that a woman sometimes says, in her defence,——“ Don’t “ think I am like the generality of women ;”—as if, to resemble the generality of women were a shame.

CHAP. X.

Lord and Lady B——'s arrival at Paris.

——The truly comic Character she is there obliged to support, though she is no longer a Comedian.

IT will be naturally expected that the death of the Marchioness of B—— entirely altered the plan of our Paris-journey; but it affected it very little. For after we had held a good deal of council with Don Cirillo, and the Major-Domo, who were both very deeply interested in our welfare, it was agreed upon that we should only defer it for a week longer. We reflected that there was no surer method to reconcile the people of Palermo to our marriage, than to make them anxious for the Count's return; and, likewise,

to make them apprehensive that on my account he would not live amongst them any more. I will not presume to say that this equality of rank, which is in general so rigorously insisted on in marriage, is prejudicial to the world; as such an assertion might seem partial in me : for universal opinion is entitled to some veneration ; at least, I do not think myself qualified to oppose it. Whatever was the motive which first introduced this law ; and whatever is the motive which maintains it, I have nothing to say against it ; but I shall only observe with pleasure that it has been abrogated, or gently interpreted in favour of many women who have lived before me ; and many thousands as well as myself, have come under it's animadversion. We seldom scruple to do any action, provided we can procure for it the approbation of the world. It makes laws, and it likewise assumes a
right

right to dispense with them ; and though it very often contradicts itself in it's proceedings, it would be absurd in us to call it to account when it's decisions fall in with our wishes. We concluded that it would disapprove of Lord B——'s marriage on the first report of it ; but we hoped, that when it was a little familiarized to it, and after we had got some great ones on our side, it would be more favourable to us in it's opinion. For these reasons, we determined not to go immediately to Palermo, how pressing soever the Count's relations might be for his return. The journey to Paris suited exactly with our views. When I had made a figure there, where my extraction was not known, we had reason to hope that on my return from that metropolis, the model of taste, and elegance, and honoured with it's approbation, I should find all Palermo prejudiced in my fa-

vour; and that forgetting the station in which they had once seen me, they would only think of me, surrounded with my new glory—affluent in circumstances—married to a nobleman—and, dignified with the sanction of France.

This reasoning of ours was founded upon our daily experience of the world, which is almost totally governed by prejudice, and appearances. We, therefore, determined to go to Paris before we returned to Palermo. Besides, as the Count found I was desirous to see that famous capital, before I sequestered myself in a corner of Sicily, he would have been disposed to gratify me, supposing the other considerations had been out of the question. The Major-Domo had brought a good sum of money with him for the use of his master. The late Marchioness, amongst her other properties, was very avaricious, and

and lived with little show in order to save expence. Her extreme parsimony had put it now the more in the power of her son to live agreeably to his rank, and his generosity. He had appeared in Milan like a private travelling gentleman; he did not, indeed, want any convenience; but his figure was not splendid in the least degree. He now equipped himself in a manner suitable to his station, that he might do honour to his aunt at Paris, and command the respect that was due to him from strangers.

I was now raised from a low, to a high condition: I was not only provided with all the requisites for a lady of quality; but even a princess could hardly have desired more. Cloaths, jewels, and other female ornaments were heaped upon me in such profusion that I was quite lost in the variety
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of magnificence: and cried out every day enough, enough; for I knew not what to make of them. I did not cohabit with the Count till we set out for France, that I might avoid the censure of those who were not acquainted with the truth of our adventures. We were four in this journey; Lord B—— and myself; Don Cirillo, and the Major-Domo; but we, likewise, took along with us two maids to attend upon me, and four footmen; so that our train had somewhat of a courtly appearance.

With this magnificent equipage we arrived at Paris fifteen days after our departure from Milan; having stopped sometimes to see whatever was most curious upon the road. After we had there provided ourselves with a proper lodging, and given strict injunctions to the servants to say nothing of our marriage, Lord B—— went to visit
his

his aunt, who received him with open arms, and expressed her regret to him that he had not come to live with her. She seemed charmed with his agreeable mien, his ease, and gentility : and as the news of his mother's death had reached her, she condoled with him on that accident, as relationship, and decorum required.

Then, she naturally explained to him her motives for desiring him to come to Paris after the death of her son ; but I have no mind to forestall them at present ; for I think it will contribute more to the pleasure of the reader, not to inform him of them, till I came to the knowledge of them myself in the order of my history.

It looked as if I had been destined to be a comedian even after I had left off the profession, and commenced a
lady

lady of quality : for I had yet a fictitious character to support, which had the desired effect, and succeeded to my advantage. When the Count returned from his aunt's he desired me to put on my best cloaths, and make her a visit with Don Cirillo : but he bade us observe that we were to pass for man and wife ; that he had said we *were* ; and that at a proper time he would give us his reasons for so doing.

The proposal at first set me a laughing ; if I had not been already married to Lord B—— it would have given me some uneasiness, But as I perceived he was tranquil and serene, I set about gratifying him with equal ease, and chearfulness. Don Cirillo said so many witty, and gallant things on the part he was to play with me, that they afforded us a long entertainment. The undertaking was not difficult either
to

to him, or me : for as he was a poet, and I was a comedian: neither the one, nor the other could be a novice in the arts of fiction.

Indeed we supported our little drama with no small dexterity. I soon found that the Marchioness of N—— concluded I was an Italian; that Lord B—— was my humble servant; that he had so long deferred his journey to Paris upon my account; and that at length I had accompanied him thither; because I could not bear the thoughts of being separated from him. We made no scruple to second her opinion; and we did it so effectually that she honoured me with her confidence from that very day; and promised to make me acquainted with all the genteelst people of Paris, which accordingly she did in a very little time.

I always had a particular happiness in gaining people's affections ; and I experienced it remarkably on this occasion. In less than a month I found myself such a favourite of the Marchioness, that she could hardly be without me for a single moment. As the French are not much prejudiced in favour of the Italians, as *we* have not all that vivacity which their climate, and education give *them*, she looked upon me to be a prodigy of wit, as I had a cast of originality about me, and was as talkative as any Parisian amongst them. If they had known in what school I had been educated, they would not have been surprized at my pertness ; and I really think they would not have loved me the less. Whilst I was endeavouring to endear myself more, to the lady, I often asked the Count why he first put me upon appearing in this borrowed character.

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For a long time he refused to satisfy my enquiry; but at length he was explicit with me, when he saw that I had thoroughly ingratiated myself with Lady N——. You must know, said he, I had planned this whole scene to keep myself upon a good footing with my aunt; who intended that I should marry the lady that was to have been her son's wife if he had lived.

I was not at all alarmed at her ladyship's scheme; because it could no longer affect me: but I was surprized that he took this method of waving her design, when, if he had declared that he was already married to me it must necessarily have been laid aside. You are very much *out*, said he, in your judgment; I must not barely refuse my aunt; but I must refuse her without any danger to myself: and in order to effect my aim I wanted to fix you in
her

her good graces, that my refusal might be the less grating to her. I assure you, upon my honour, I am so far from repenting of this poetical invention, which, if you don't know so much, was suggested to me by Don Cirillo, that I already see the good effects that will flow from it. Go on as you have begun; and when the time comes for laying aside the mask, I will tell you how to take it off in the most graceful manner.

These words set me at ease: and I made no further enquiries: I was only affronted at Don Cirillo for not thinking me capable of keeping a secret of this nature. He excused himself, by saying, that he was afraid of throwing me into some apprehension; as he knew me to be timorous, and suspicious in love. My doubts were, therefore, all dissipated: and I was now determined to be

be more industrious than ever in winning the Marchioness's heart completely; which I had already sufficiently influenced in my favour.

To gain my end, I made use of a piece of art familiar enough to my sex, and which I imparted to the Count for his approbation. I proposed to pretend that I was going to return to Italy, and that I was called thither by urgent affairs. She was extremely shocked when we tried our device upon her; and begged of Lord B—— to detain me, that she might not now be deprived of my company, which, as she was pleased to say, gave her inexpressible satisfaction.

We played the scene so naturally, that it was more than once warmly debated in her presence, betwixt the Count and me, whether or no we should
soon

soon go back to Italy, as if we had been really agitating a serious question, and differed much in the determination of it. I should almost be tempted to commit our dialogues to paper, did I not reflect that I am writing a history of my life, and not a comedy. Strange are the caprices of fortune! When I was in a company of players she put me out of love with a profession, which I was now exercising for my pleasure, with this difference only, that I formerly exhibited fictitious characters in a full theatre, whereas I was now acting but before a few. Perhaps one who had not been bred to the stage would not have executed her part so well; and, therefore, nothing in this world ought too much to alarm, or disgust us: because fortune often leads us to the end we ourselves proposed by means that are quite contrary to our views, and inclinations: perhaps those
 very

very means were necessary to the acquisition of that end; though superficial judges were of a different opinion, who decide from appearances; whose gross minds are only struck with what falls immediately under their senses: and who are too stupid to image the connexion betwixt the *present*, and the *future*; merely because the *future* succeeds the *present*, and is hidden from their eyes.

CHAP

C H A P. XI.

The Marchioness's first Light into the Deceit Lady B—— had put upon her, in personating the Wife of Don Cirillo.— Lady B——'s Fears that she had offended her.

THE intrigue of every comedy must, at length, be unravelled; and it was now time for the plot of mine to be cleared up. It's conclusion was no less whimsical than it's beginning; and, I shall beg leave to recount it at large, as a proof of that sincerity, which has all along guided my hand, in writing these Memoirs. As the Marchioness now could never, almost, be without me, a fund for entertaining her often failed me; and I was glad to throw out any
subject

subject of discourse which came into my head. It had, more than once, fallen in my way, to tell her, that Don Cirillo, my supposed husband, was fond of literature, and had a considerable reputation in poetry. One day, amongst others, when his studies were our topic, I proposed to entertain the Marchioness with one of his compositions, if she would vouchsafe to hear it.—She was very desirous to hear one, and begged of me to repeat it immediately; but I had none by heart, and only one about me, which was the very last I should have shown her; because it was composed on Lord B——’s marriage and mine. I ought, likewise, to have concealed it, that I might have spared myself the pain of reciting my own praises. But, as the ode was applicable to the marriage of any other person, I thought I might safely gratify her with it: for, it was impossible for me to foresee what actual-

ly happened. Suppressing, therefore, the particular occasion of the poem, I took it out of my pocket, and read it to the Marchioness, with all that warmth, and expression, which will be allowed a theatrical lady, who had been famous in her profession. I always set so much value upon Don Cirillo's performances, that I have promised to embellish these simple pages with them. I must therefore, keep my word throughout, and, likewise, transcribe my Epithalamium.

CUPID and HYMEN.

An ODE.

I.

THE patron of the tuneful choir,
 Rais'd in my breast his hallow'd
 fire ;
 My mind, high borne, on fancy's wings,
 Ardent I struck the golden strings.

II.

II.

Stretched in a soft Italian bower,
Shade fost'ring my poetic power.
Oh! gentle Nymph, thy virtuous praise
Was the fond subject of my lays.

III.

When, lo, two boys, as Venus fair,
With glowing cheeks, dishevell'd hair,
Stood suddenly before my eyes;——
——I check'd my numbers, through
surprize.

IV.

Hood-winked was one; — his flaxen
hair,
Wantonly floated in the air:
Wings, bow, he had, and golden darts;
Unsparring still of human hearts.

V.

The other, with an honest mein,
 Attendant best, on beauty's queen,
 Waved his bright torch, whose hallow'd
 flame
 Sheds blessings on the virtuous dame.

VI.

' This brilliant arrow dost thou see ?'
 Then said the god of love to me ;
 ' A keener shaft, or one more bright,
 ' Ne'er from my quiver took its flight.

VII.

' By this, at length, Rosara found,
 ' That I the coyest heart could wound :
 ' For it pierced her's :——her blood,
 ' behold,
 ' Heightening the burnish of the gold.

VIII.

' What snares was I not forced to lay,
 ' Ere I could make her feel my sway ;
 ' What

- ‘ What toils, what watchings did I
- ‘ prove,
- ‘ Like other nymphs, to make her love !

IX.

- ‘ In winter’s cold, and summer’s flame
- ‘ I chac’d the unsubmitting dame :
- ‘ And, oft despairing of my prey,
- ‘ I threw my bow and shafts away.

X.

- ‘ But I, at length, her pride have broke,
- ‘ And bound her in my filken yoke ;
- ‘ That yoke, which all conditions bear,
- ‘ The wise, the valliant and the fair.

XI.

- ‘ ’Twas I then only who could lower
- ‘ Her pride, by my resistless power ;
- ‘ And yet, the boy, whom here you see,
- ‘ Would wrest the honour due to me.

XII.

- ‘ I claim the privilege to shed
- ‘ Sweet odours o’er the nuptial bed ;
- ‘ Flush, with fresh charms, the bloom-
- ‘ ing fair,
- ‘ And crown, with joys, the happy pair.

XIII.

- ‘ Begone then quickly from my sight,
- ‘ Avoid my wrath, by timely flight:
- ‘ The queen of peace and smiles, I fear,
- ‘ Our strife, unthinking youth, may hear.

XIV.

- ‘ Know, bold wand’rer ! Hymen stern
- ‘ replied,
- ‘ Thou never shalt my motions guide ;
- ‘ Unterrified, by thee, I stay,
- ‘ Or, if I chuse it, go away

XV.

- ‘ Licentious vagrant ! every heart,
- ‘ By thee, thou say’st, is doomed to smart,
- ‘ But

‘ But, what great triumph dost thou
‘ gain,
‘ In causing universal pain ?

XVI.

‘ When thou hast done the cruel deed,
‘ Hast caused some tender heart to
‘ bleed ;
‘ Thou, ruthless tyrant, dost forego
‘ Thy victim haply plunged in woe.

XVII.

‘ But I, the fair-one’s bosom calm,
‘ And turn thy poison into balm.
‘ I teach her virtuous joys to feel——
‘ ——’Tis thine to wound, and mine to
‘ heal.

XVIII.

‘ I, to Rosara, gentle maid,
‘ Administred my welcome aid,
[‘ And sooth’d to peace her worthy breast,
‘ By thy barbarity distress’d.

XIX.

- ' Affiduous ever in my care,
- ' To her this sacred torch I bear.
- ' Thy scorching fire I mean to tame,
- ' And substitute my lambent flame.

XX.

- ' Wilt thou my baseness then disclaim,
- ' And make thy wickedness thy fame :
- ' And, must a blind presumptuous knave
- ' The friend of human nature brave ?

XXI.

- ' To Venus dost thou chuse to go,
- ' Stript of thy arrows and thy bow ;
- ' Or, with my torch, how wouldst thou
- ' bear
- ' To see thy wings dissolve in air ?

XXII.

- ' He said ; and shook his torch : I rose,
- ' Celestial anger to compose ;
- ' And

- ' And cried — Your keen resentment
cease ;
- ' Be kindred deities, at peace.

XXIII.

- ' This generous bride would wish to
 ' own
- ' The genial power of either throne ;
- ' And she so lively, honest, fair,
- ' Of either god, deserves the care.

XXIV.

- ' And if two deities will hear
- ' My judgment, with a patient ear,
- ' I, though no Paris, may assign,
- ' Stations, to you, of heavenly line.

XXV.

- ' Cupid, do thou Rosara's face
- ' And eyes exalt, with heavenly grace ;
- ' There let thy ardent influence rove,
- ' And let her speak the stile of love.

XXVI.

- And, Hymen, be it thy good part
- To govern still her generous heart ;
- And let fair truth for ever bloom,
- There, from the altar to the tomb.

XXVII.

- Ye ministers of bliss repair,
- (You're both contented) to the fair ;
- Protect her still from mortal harms ;
- Watch o'er her heart and o'er her
 ' charms.'

XXVIII.

I saw my verdict could assuage
 A torrent of immortal rage :
 They smiled,—and from my sight with-
 drew,
 Diffusing fragrance as they flew.

Before I read this ode of Don Cirillo's
 to Lady N——, I did not reflect that
 my name was often made use of in it :
and

and I had not presence of mind enough to substitute another, that would run with the measure. Hence it was, that she asked me who this Rosara was, that was so highly celebrated by my supposed husband: for she was so much prejudiced in my favour, that she thought no person, except myself, could deserve such delicate praises. I eluded the artful question, by pretending that this composition was written in honour of a Milanese lady, a friend of mine, who was of the same name with me: but I blushed to such a degree, while I spoke, that the Marchioness suspected the truth of the matter, and rallied me for want of sincerity.

In the midst of her banter, her nephew came in; who, when he heard the cause of it, said, with a smile, to the Marchioness, — Suppose now, madam, this ode was really written in praise of

her?—If it were so, replied she, I should only say, that she deserves much more; and that this poem, as written by her husband, is certainly sincere. But, as Don Cirillo has a turn for Epithalamiums, I shall desire him to write one for you when you are married. At these words we looked earnestly at each other, and could hardly keep from laughing. Oh! madam, answered he, Don Cirillo has already composed an epithalamium for my marriage. Already? said she; and pray may not I see it, as I am the main promoter of the match?—You have already seen it, madam, answered the Count; and I now only want to have your comment upon it. How, said she? —She was going on; but, he had already left the room, without giving her time to finish her question.

His mysterious discourse made her a little thoughtful: but she did not reach its drift:

drift : for she had not previously entertained the least surmise of our plot. She was for having me give her some more light into the matter ; but I evaded an explicit answer ; and told her I could not clear up the ambiguity of the Count's jest : but, that I would use my utmost endeavours to come at the bottom of it, in order to satisfy her curiosity. We dropped the subject for that time : but I was a good deal perplexed about the consequences which might follow it. She could not, indeed, unmarry us :—there I was secure : yet, notwithstanding, it grieved me very much to think that I should be found guilty of any deceit, with a lady, who had honoured me with her tenderness, and friendship : and I had great reason to fear, from a gloom which I saw already hanging about her, that her resentment would be very warm whenever she should discover the truth. I knew not but she
might

might have entered into very strong engagements with the Lady whom she intended for her nephew's wife : I had great reason to fear that they might make against me ; and, that her shame, on finding herself deceived, might make her construe our stratagem into an offence, which very presumptuously and grossly attacked the respectable character of Lord B——'s aunt, and my benefactress, and friend.

CHAP.

C H A P. XII.

Rosara's Conversation with the Marchioness of N——, in which she desires her to persuade her Nephew to marry.

A FEW days after this accident the Marchioness took me apart, and held a discourse with me which very much embarrassed me for an answer.—My dear friend, said she to me, the more I reflect on my nephew's repugnancy to marry, the less I can divine the cause of it. I can never bring him to determine to take a wife, and yet he never gives me an absolute denial. I have a match in view for him, and I don't think I could propose to him a more eligible one in all France. The lady has many suitors; and it has required
all

all my weight to keep her unfixed in her choice till I should be able to extort my nephew's resolution. I don't say that she is one of the first rank in the kingdom. I was never very scrupulous on that article: and I am of opinion that nothing more than a reasonable share of wealth, with good personal qualities is requisite to make the married state happy, and that they confer sufficient dignity upon it. Miss P—— has a fortune sufficient to make many families cut a handsome figure, though indeed, ours, I thank Heaven, stands in need of no accession to its opulence. Restless mortals that we are! we are never rich enough; because our expences have no bounds: and the freaks of imagination augmenting in proportion to our abilities, we often become poor in the midst of affluence. As my nephew knows the world, as he is young, and has a good taste, he ought
to

to be sensible of the force of these observations, and regulate his conduct accordingly. Why then does he not accept the match which I have proposed to him? It was chiefly on account of it that I sent for him so pressingly to Paris.

Can it be true, my friend, that your regard, and his for each other is wrought up to the force of passion, and that it makes him, and, perhaps, you too, view this marriage with disgust, and terror? Ah! let not this be. There is no room for it in an age, and country where the duties of man and wife, and a genteel friendship may subsist together. Should the Count, my nephew, marry Miss P—— you need not lose him on that score; but because you will have nothing to fear from a rival who will be much your inferior in beauty, and vivacity; and, likewise, because she must
content

content herself with being his wife ; and must not think of debarring him of a fashionable gallantry, which she herself must likewise carry on; unless she has a mind to war with universal custom.—No, my friend; I will not think you are weak enough to fear that you will be prejudiced in the heart of my nephew by a wife, who will glory in loving you as much as him, when she finds how much you are loved by me. Let us break off, then these obstacles and delays: and be you the first to persuade him to a step which will redound a good deal both to your honour and advantage. I assure you, if you bring this treaty to a conclusion, you will not only very much oblige me, but, likewise, do a very great favour to the young lady, whose warmest gratitude, and friendship you may expect in return for your good office: and I am

am sure it will bring you a considerable emolument: though I know this circumstance will be the least inducement with a person of your generosity to act as I desire.

I see very clearly what influence you have over the Count; and that a word to you is sufficient to make him determine even against his will. Take my word for it, you shall have no cause to repent of your application; and if you gain nothing else by it, you may be certain I shall always acknowledge it with a maternal tenderness.

Here the Marchioness was silent; and I was silent too: for I knew not at once what answer to make her. I was unwilling to refuse the Marchioness's request; lest I should seem jealous, or be thought rude: and I was, likewise, loth to comply with it; lest, whenever
the

the truth came out, she might think I had carried my fiction to an insolent heighth. To steer the gentle medium, I told her I was not satisfied that I had so much weight with Lord B——, as she imagined; and that he had never said a word to me of the match which she intended for him. I told her I had as great a regard for the Count as could consist with the laws of honour: I, therefore, thought it my duty as his friend to have his interest at heart, as warmly as my own. And nothing would give me more satisfaction than a marriage which would be so agreeable to his aunt, and so advantageous to himself. Here I attempted an artful stroke; I wanted to sound the mind of the Marchioness thoroughly, and see what I could hope from her in my circumstances. I observed to her, that in reflecting on his unwillingness to marry
it

it came into my head that there might be a previous engagement betwixt him and some Italian lady, which her ladyship, and I knew nothing of: for she was not let much into his affairs; and I had only for a few months been honoured with his acquaintance.

If he has any previous engagement, answered the Marchioness, why does he not in the name of Heaven, inform me of it. Far should it be from me to controul his affections: my chief aim is to make him happy, not to make him rich: for riches and happiness are not always associates. But what sort of an engagement can that be which suffers him to be so much yours, and gives him up to you undisputed? I should be sorry for my nephew if Italy abounded in ladies like you: and I heartily wish that you were at liberty, and that he payed his addresses to you:
in

in that case, I assure you, I would not presume to make the least opposition to his desires; nay, I would take a pride in promoting such a marriage. But my dearest Rosara, can Italy produce a lady like you or Miss P—— can the Count hesitate betwixt the choice of either of you, and any woman of that country?

The Marchioness had said enough to convince me she was so far prejudiced in my favour, that she would by no means be shocked whenever she should come to know that Lord B—— had married me. But a ticklish doubt still remained: perhaps the Marchioness talked in this manner, as she concluded I was a lady;——should she come to the knowledge of my birth, and education, she might probably change her language. I was, likewise, for trying her sentiments with regard to this point;
and

and I set about the inquiry without much fear : for when she had in the former part of the conversation mentioned Miss P——'s high rank, she told me it was a circumstance she did not pay much regard to. I, therefore, told her she did me too much honour in putting me upon a footing with Miss P—— : for in respect to wealth and extraction, I was a mere cypher in the world. Very fine, truly, replied her ladyship : have I not already told you that I make very little account of these shadows of worth ? And pray, after all, what is Miss P—— that you may not be compared with her ? Her father was once a receiver of the king's revenues ; and if we mount upwards to her grand-father, and great-grandfather, we shall find they were little better ; perhaps, indeed, a great deal worse. What has been, is over ; and a present splendour supported with prudence and public esteem, effaces

faces the obscurity of the meanest origin. Do you know that Mrs. G——, whom you talked with t'other night at the play, and by whom you saw the brightest stars of our hemisphere were attracted; do you know that I have heard her sing in that very theatre, wherein you see her shine with so much pomp, and grandeur? These occurrences do not deserve the name of phænomena; they are not rare enough to strike those with wonder who are acquainted with human nature, and the vicissitudes of fortune.

These words of the Marchioness too made a good deal for my purpose; and I thought I had now drawn enough out of her. I promised her ladyship that I would use the utmost of my endeavours to come at the Count's reasons for declining the match which she had offered him before I urged him to accept

cept it. And here our conversation ended. Thus I engaged to do nothing which had the appearance of bare-faced falsehood: nay, I had been preparing to come to the close of our comedy, which could not now last much longer. Just as I was going to take my leave of the Marchioness, and return to our lodgings, Lord B—— came to call upon his aunt; and kept me a little longer with her that we might go home together. On this occasion she told him a piece of news, which before had escaped her memory. She said she had a servant in the house who had just returned from settling some business of his own at Bourdeaux; and who, on hearing Lord B—— talked of, said he had known him at Naples; and was very desirous of having the honour to pay his respects to him in person. I will send him to your house, added she; you will find him a

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man of vivacity, and acuteness. But I am afraid he is wanting in point of discretion. She said no more of him; and we took our leave of her without troubling our heads much about this domestic.

In our way home, I gave Lord B.— an account of the long dialogue I had with the Marchioness, with which he was highly pleased. Though, indeed, his whole aim was to approve his conduct to her, and to the world. The expectation of inheriting her fortune did not enslave him, and make him betray his own happiness. Selfishness, was never his failing. He was quite the reverse of his mother; and employed his thoughts more how to expend, than how to accumulate. And as his fortune was superior to that of many of his rank, his great care was, after he had made an allowance for things suitable

suitable to his station, to appropriate the overplus to the relief of want, and the encouragement of neglected merit. If we could inspire his sentiments into the breasts of all the wealthy, the world would be far less overspread with misery than it is; and their riches would then throw a noble splendour around them, which, according to the common course of the world, are locked up in coffers, or squandered on the comfortless purchase of sensual pleasures: hence their money either makes itself wings, and flees away, and leaves them in the most abject distress; or else death tears them from their beloved treasure: for he neither will be bribed to let them stay with their hoard; nor will he suffer them to take it with them.

C H A P. XIII.

The Surprize Lord and Lady B—— are thrown into, by the Marchioness's Servant.——The risk they run of having their Secret divulged by him.——Their timely Prevention of that Discovery.

TOWARDS the evening of that same day, word was brought the Count, who was then with me, that a domestic of Lady N——'s was below, and begged to speak with him. He recollected what she had told us in the morning, and ordered him to be sent in. The reader will easily imagine, that I was not a little surprized to see my father appear before us ; who did
not

not know me at first : for time, and dress, had made a considerable change in my appearance. The Count, in his turn, hardly knew him again ; for he had only seen him once or twice at Naples : but when he learnt, from my confusion, who he was, he was no less astonished than myself. After our surprize, at so unexpected a rencounter was over, the Count charged my father not to discover to any person that I was his daughter, till he himself could reveal it without any hazard. I have already given the character of my father ; who, though he was a very ridiculous man upon the whole, yet, had he been endowed with steadiness, and prudence, had understanding and plausibility enough to have made his fortune.

—Ah ! my Lord, answered he, do you think I am such a fool as to discredit my daughter by babbling ? If I had ever dreamt that she was to be a Count-

tests, I would have been so far from submitting to serve, in order to gain a livelihood, that I would have pretended I was a decayed nobleman; and thus have endeavoured to live by the compassion of others. Since the accident which befell her at Naples, I have always concluded she was dead; nor shall I now enquire of you how she escaped; as it is enough for me, that she is alive, and in a flourishing station: and I, likewise, hope that a ray of her fortune will descend upon me.—As for me, I am so far from disclosing my affairs to any one, that it is an invariable rule with me, to give an account of my circumstances quite opposite to their real state. If we have but talents to act on this wide theatre of the world, it is always in our power to assume a thousand different characters, without detection, amidst the innumerable multitude of mankind. I have always had the good
fortune

fortune to make the world believe me whatever I chose to pass for: but, I never gave myself out for what I really was. I have changed my country every year;—and every year my character. I have seen other fellow-adventurers succeed by this plan; for which reason I have adhered to it.—T'other day, I met with an old acquaintance of mine, whom I knew in England; and, I found he there played the regular physician; though I knew him to be a mere mountebank.—I knew another, who who passed himself off in Naples, for secretary to the prince of P——; though I have seen him stand at his Highness's back, and serve him with a glass of wine.—I knew a third, who passes for a man of Letters; though I have seen him in the quality of prompter to Mr. Marbell's company of comedians; nay, he was even candle-snuffer upon occasion.—Why then may not I give myself out

for a gentleman of birth ; especially, as my daughter is now a lady ? Don't imagine, my lord, that I will make a wrong use of the secret with which you have entrusted me. I will immediately fall upon some pretext to get a dismissal from my lady's service ; and I will go and live in some other country, under a character, upon a footing with your own. If you would only be pleased to give me a hundred louis, you should soon see, by the public prints, that some foreign country was honoured with the arrival of a Chinese nobleman.

He would still have run on with his voluble eloquence, had not the Count stopped his mouth, by paying him immediately down the money he desired, and ordering him to leave Paris as soon as he could, by some fair pretence, which might prevent the suspicions of the Marchioness. We thought we had purchased

purchased our quiet at a very cheap rate, in thus ridding ourselves of a person, who, by his extravagant and shameful politics, did me so little honour.— My father was overjoyed to find that he had such a sum of money at his command, and such a source, to which he might apply for more, when he should stand in need of it. He was as good as his word, and got his dismissal from the Marchioness, pretending that Lord B—— had informed him, that an aunt of his was dead at Naples, and that he was desirous of going thither with all possible speed, as he hoped to find himself her heir.

After that time I never saw him more; and, after two or three letters, which he wrote me, I had not any distinct account of him. However, we collected pretty certainly, from many circumstances, that he was drowned, in

another voyage he was making to England.

In the mean time Lady N—— was expecting from me some satisfaction, with regard to her nephew's aversion to marry the lady she had destined for him; and, having received his instructions how I was to conduct myself, I made her a visit, and addressed her in the following manner. — I have done, madam, all that lay in my power to draw out the secret of Lord B——'s heart: and, though he has not revealed it to me, I am almost certain he cannot marry the lady you propose for him, without being prejudiced and perjured. I fancy he has advanced farther in his connexion with some lady than you are aware of: and, therefore, I beg you will permit me to drop this commission: for, if I proceed in the execution of it, I, perhaps, may lose the esteem which
your

your nephew is pleased to have for me. I heartily wish, that the woman of his choice may be, likewise, agreeable to you : and, I assure you, I would frankly give up, to her, that regard, with which you favour me, however highly I prize it. I beg, your ladyship may not be offended at my refusal: for his circumstances, which are not yet known to us, may be such as deserve our compassion and pardon. Permit me now to lay my case before you.—Don Cirillo's parents could not endure to hear of his marrying me: for in confidence I tell you, my birth and poverty were such, that, when I was very young, I was obliged to dance upon the rope for my bread ; and afterwards to turn actress ; though my sentiments were always superior to my station.—Don Cirillo married me, when I was in such a situation as, I am sure, would have excited your humanity : for I was reduc-

ed very low, and near to death : but, the consideration of becoming his wife, revived and restored me. Had you, madam, been the aunt, or the mother of my husband, could you have had the heart to disapprove of his marriage, dictated by love, and that tenderness, which my sickness naturally raised ? Or, would an advantageous match, which you had designed for him, have been able, at that moving crisis, to suppress the exertion of your active benevolence ? No, madam, I am sure you would not have been ungenerous on that occasion : for your humanity is amongst the most eminent of your virtues : and, as you have a sensible soul, I dare say you are not such a stranger to the force of love yourself, as to condemn it too harshly in others.

No, certainly, replied the Marchioness :—I should not have been angry

gry with your husband for marrying you, if I had been his mother: for, your good qualities illustrate your extraction, whatever it is: and, besides, the sincerity with which you give an account of yourself, endears you much to an ingenuous mind. Why is not the Count, my nephew, as sincere as you? why has he not talked to me before, at least why does he not talk to me now in the following strain?—I have engaged to marry,—or, I have already married such a lady—for such and such reasons: then I should trouble him no more with my proposal, and I should think no more of it. I am so charmed with frankness, that it can, at any time, disarm my anger; though Lord B—— needs not fear my resentment: for he is not my son. Since he does not deem me worthy of his confidence, I will suffer the affront with patience; and I shall never press him to marry this
young

young lady any more. If you, my dearest friend, should be able to discover who the lady is, to whom he is attached, or married, pray trust the secret to me : for I shall love her, though I know her not, and punish the Count for his distrust of me, by showing myself more worthy of his confidence than he was pleased to think me.

These words were so obliging, that that they almost extorted from me a thorough confession of my situation. The circumstances could not be more favourable to a declaration : my heart swelled at the restraint I put upon it, by withholding the truth any longer from so generous a person. My lips were impatient to say, ‘ I am the woman to whom he is engaged for life.’— I thought this was just the time for closing our comedy, which it seemed absurd to protract. But the Count had
ordered

ordered me only to go as far as I had proceeded; and I did not care to go one step beyond his commission. He was for opening our marriage to his aunt, and making her approve of it by degrees; and he rightly judged, that our caution, and her curiosity, contributed best to the promotion of his design.— he reserved the full discovery of the secret to himself: and the event showed, that he had judged wisely: for he chose the very properest juncture for the solution of the knot; when his aunt was engaged unawares, on our side, and could not recede, by her treatment of us, from her former sentiments, without bringing upon herself the imputation of insincerity;—a vice, which very highly offended her, whenever she found it in others.

C H A P. XIV.

Lord and Lady B——'s real situation discovered to Lady P——.—Lady B—— brought to Bed of a Son; and by that Circumstance, fixed in the Marchioness's Affections.

THE Marchioness was extremely anxious to know what Lady was her nephew's favourite. In order to bring her to our purpose we were determined to advance a step farther, and to make her more afraid of our departure than ever. One day when the Count had received letters from Italy, and read them in her presence, he surprized her very much by saying—we must now resolve to depart without delay;—I am extremely sorry, madam, that

that I must leave you : I am still more sorry that I cannot accept of the match you have been so good as to put in my power : but so I am obliged to act : I cannot give you a further explanation. As the good lady loved me very sincerely, she even shed tears at the thoughts rather of parting with me, than with her nephew.

As for him, she could not abstain from reproaching him with ingratitude. You are not satisfied, said she, to him with being married, and, consequently, with depriving me of yourself ; but you must, likewise, rob me of this amiable person, for whom I have conceived so warm an esteem, and without whom life will be very gloomy to me. Go you whither your wife calls you ; but leave this lady with me : her company will make your departure less painful. If you do otherwise, you neither love
your

your aunt, nor your friend. You do not love your aunt; because you occasion her so much grief; you love not your friend; because in taking her from me so abruptly, it is probable you will give her a good deal of pain. I must here take her part; because, perhaps, she is afraid that if she should argue against your determination, she would encounter your obstinate refusal. If you had a true regard for Rosara; you would not take her from me, for the sake of a lady whom I know nothing of.

If you have not as yet known her, nor seen her, replied the Count, I'll present her to you, madam, immediately: for I would not have you think me so far ungrateful as to refuse you that satisfaction. If you desire to know who the lady is, not whom I am going into Italy to marry, but whom I did marry before I left Italy. I will show you her
very

very soon, and I tell you before hand that you have a great love for her, and that you will always continue to love her ; unless you are of a changeable disposition. Where is she, replied the Marchioness ; and the Count turning to me ; here she is, answered he ; you know her as well as you know myself. Hitherto I have concealed her relation to me from you ; because her station, and adventures made me fear that you would not favour us with your countenance. Now, as she herself has given you her history, and she is so dear to you that you cannot endure to be without her, I beg leave to present her to you, not to ask pardon of you for our innocent fiction, but that she may, if possible, by the title of my wife, be yet more firmly possessed of your affections, with which you have already honoured her on account of her own good properties. I have now imparted my secret

cret to you, and I am very doubtful whether or no I should impart it to the rest of the world. You are very well acquainted with its prejudices; however, to show you that I have confidence in you, of which you lately doubted, I shall, in this particular, be entirely regulated by you advice. Command it madam, and what I have hitherto said, shall be buried in silence. If you blush for such a niece, I will take her from Paris, and no one shall know that she has any affinity to you. If you have a mind that she should remain with you, I have so much reliance on your prudence that I will leave her to your care till I go into Sicily to settle my affairs; from whence I shall return as soon as possible, and live with you. My will in this matter, shall be conducted by yours; and you have only to speak in order to be exactly obeyed.

I have already given so minute an account of the Marchioness's temper, that one may easily imagine what impression this discourse made upon her. At the close of our comedy, which she so little expected, she remained motionless: no less, I believe, with joy, than with wonder. Recovering herself, at length, by degrees, she looked stedfastly at me, to read my feelings in my face. I durst not raise my eyes from the ground; lest I should meet her's, and see my condemnation in them. I recovered from my severe suspense by raising my head, and finding her arms thrown about my neck. She saluted me with ardour, and pressed me to her heart.

Her expressions were suitable to those marks of tenderness: for they were as obliging as possible with regard to me, and gave very promising hopes to
my

my husband. When the first surprize, and endearments were over, we agreed that I might be owned to be the wife of her nephew, without any inconvenience; provided we said nothing of my life, and adventures; which were unknown at Paris. It was, likewise, fixed that the Count should return to Italy to settle his affairs, and that I should remain with the Marchioness, that we might not be exposed to the tattle of Palermo, where I should undoubtedly have found people envious of my good fortune, and, consequently, malignant critics on my past conduct. This separation from Lord B——, pierced me to the heart; though I had so much reason to be pleased with the consequences of it; for I was five months gone with child: and I was very much indisposed in my pregnancy. Nothing less than my unwillingness to disoblige a lady to whom I owed so much could have

have prevailed with me to part with a husband, who, indeed, on his part, could not endure to have me out of his sight for any time. But unmixed happiness is not the portion of humanity; we must often sacrifice pleasure to convenience!

The Count set out for Palermo, accompanied by his Major-Domo; and Don Cirillo remained with the Marchioness, and me. We thought proper to let the world believe that he and I were man and wife till it should be determined whether we were to settle in France, or in Italy. My husband was absent from me five months, and they appeared to me more than five years, though I had the kindness of the Marchioness, and the amusements of Paris to divert me. He assured me in every letter that he would be at Paris by the time of my lying-in; but he could
not

not keep his word with me: for his affairs detained him at Palermo longer than he expected.

From the time of his departure, I lived in the house of the Marchioness; where I had every thing I could wish for. Indeed her love, and tenderness for me were so great, that the pleasure they gave me was not unmixed with pain. She was so much grieved whenever she saw me indisposed, that I was often obliged to conceal my illness, to prevent her uneasiness. When the time of my delivery came she was almost distracted with fear for me. Lord B—— was far from me at this dangerous juncture; and I was afraid I should die without seeing him. I was deeply impressed with this idea; and it made me so melancholy, that the Marchioness was afraid I was not contented with her services. I was brought
to

to bed, however, of a son more happily than I expected. The child, as soon as it was born, became the darling of the Marchioness; and she frankly told me, I must not look upon it, as mine: for she intended to rear it herself, and make it her heir. She sent an express to the Count, informing him of my safe delivery, and, at the same time, acquainting him with her intentions in favour of his son, which were undoubtedly very grateful to him. The express met him on the road in his way to Paris: but finding that he was too late for his purpose, he turned back from Rome to Naples to dispatch some business which he had left there unfinished. Notwithstanding, he returned the week after, and found me so well recovered that he was much surprized, and overjoyed at it. He told me that it had been long known at Palermo that I

was alive, but not that we were married, though many suspected it.

He told me he had informed his sister of our marriage, who sent me by him her congratulations, and sincerest love; he had commissioned her to divulge our marriage, and, likewise his intention of returning no more to Sicily, which would always be to me of melancholy remembrance.

Though I had never discovered to him my sentiments on that particular, he had been at the pains to think, to feel for me, and to guess them, a clear proof how much he considered, and loved me. That vanity which from my earliest years had raised me as it were above myself, made me now shudder at the idea of my first calling; not because it gave any pain to my husband; but lest it should bring contempt

tempt upon myself. In Palermo I must have deprived myself of public entertainment; lest I should hear it observed that in the house where I was now diverting myself; I had formerly diverted others. We should not obtrude upon the eyes of the world any part of our past life which makes against us: for, if we are modest ourselves, it often even praises us for failings, for which it would very severely reproach us, if we forced them upon it's observation. To know how to abstain from action for our own good is sometimes as difficult as to know how to act with propriety: and the slow, but operative progress of time does frequently more for us than the best-concerted and most vigorous endeavours of ourselves or our friends.

C H A P. XV.

*Lord and Lady B——'s Settlement in
Paris:—and the Conclusion of this
Work.*

HOW exquisite, now, and complicated was my happiness!. I was the wife of Lord B——; I was the mother of a son; I was dear to the Marchioness, and all who knew me; nor was any thing wanting to make me as happy as mortals can be, but the dexterous discovery of a secret which had been hitherto kept concealed with the utmost care. The Marchioness was for discovering this part of my story amidst our great joy for the birth of my son. I own, the judgment of the public, at that time, gave me a good deal of anxiety. 'Tis true, I had no reason to be much concerned about the world: it had given me so much, that it could

now

now take little from me : but, the world is still our tyrant ; and, we can give no reason for serving a tyrant, but that we are obliged to serve him. In proportion as I was loved by the Parisians, I was apprehensive, that the long deception I had put upon them, would, when brought to light, diminish their esteem for me. I now began to wish I had laid the truth before them at first, and avoided the mortification of acquainting them with it too late. However, the Marchioness gave me the highest encouragement; and it was my business to put a chearful face upon the matter, if, for no other reason, than that I might not offend her, by seeming to slight her judgment. She took the most favourable time to procure compassion for a woman—when I was in child-bed. Women are readily pitied ;—but illness is apt to soften the most obdurate hearts : for, we would rather be thought weak than cruel.

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How

How bounded are human views ! our prudence often teaches us to fear evil, when there is none, and to despise it when there is. No one seemed, in the least, shocked at hearing that the Marchioness's nephew was my husband, though there were above twenty persons in the room when the secret was revealed. The excuse made for keeping the affair a secret was, that I had not come to Paris with so much splendor as the Count thought due to his quality, and to the character of a bride ; who, it might be supposed, was conducted thither chiefly for show, and magnificence. This was not the true reason ; however, it was a probable one, and passed without the least doubt :—the public often conclude from words, and false appearances.

On this news, the assiduities of them all, were doubled to me ; and they payed their court to the Marchioness, by
know-

knowing a person who was now so nearly related to her. It was well for me that none of them knew any thing of my parentage; or, if they did, that they dissembled their knowledge of it, for fear of giving me pain. Though Paris was full of the new character in which I appeared, our acquaintance were not at all changed in their behaviour to me; or, rather, they caressed me more than before, as they considered that my son would be one of the richest noblemen in the kingdom. The magnificent trim into which I was put on my recovery, corresponded to the apology which we had made for our fiction; and splendor commanded for me the favour of the world, when I stood most in need of its voice. I am of opinion, that if it had been proclaimed, by sound of trumpet, that I was once a rope-dancer, and a comedian, it would not have obtained credit. Some transitions in life are so sudden, and striking, that they exceed
human

human faith. All past remembrances were so absorbed in the glare that surrounded me, that they lost not only the air of truth, but of probability. That circumstance of my good fortune I very highly enjoyed; not so much on account of the shame which would have overwhelmed me, had my mean origin come to light, as in consideration of the pain which the Count might have felt on that occasion; and his uneasiness on my score would have embittered the joy I had in the honour of being his wife.

As I found myself such a favourite, in a country where I was a stranger, it is easy to imagine, that I had no desire to quit, and expose myself somewhere else to rattles and affronts, which might have dashed with discontent the sweetest days of my life. We, therefore, determined, at the request of the Marchioness, to return no more to Sicily, at least, during her life time; which, accordingly,

ly, we have not yet done ; for it is now above five years since I was married.

Nothing has happened to me during all that time which deserves to be transmitted to posterity : and I have now got to the end of these Memoirs, in which I have faithfully executed what I proposed at the beginning. They only comprise five years of my life : for I am but twenty-five years old at present : and it is now five years since the comedian was sunk in the lady of quality. My readers may blame my history for many defects, according to the particular fancy of each : but I cannot well be taxed with being partial to my failings. If this value be allowed my work, I will allow critics to say of it whatever they please : for, I shall have gained my great view, which was, to tell the truth, and not to abuse the credulity of any one.

Though

Though I have employed two years in writing this book, I am sensible it is yet imperfect, and would have been so, had I written it yet more deliberately. To avoid the censure of malignant critics, one must not write at all : but, I flatter myself, they can say nothing of this work, which I did not foresee they would say, or which I did not regard as it deserves.

How many, as soon as they only see my title-page, will put on a dictator's frown, and pronounce the whole nonsense ! But such are only presumptuous fools, who decide without reading, and are only empty aspersers, instead of weighty oracles. Many others will despise this book, by ranking it with romances : as if romances, as well as other writings, did not demand ingenuity, and application. Neither shall these trouble me : for contempt is often the child of ignorance ; and the unlearned vulgar

gar often affect to despise what they cannot execute—nay, what they cannot understand. In the last place, how many, in order to show themselves judicious, and discreet, will take up these Memoirs to remark their faults minutely, and step by step ; not following the clear light of reason, and of art, but the livid, smouldering torch of prejudice and envy. Nor will I deign them an answer : for the laws of politeness allow a woman the privilege of being always in the right ; and, therefore, decorum forbids men to dispute with them. When they exceed with me the rules of civility and good breeding, I am not obliged to defend my cause to them, by the rules of reason :—there I shall only insist that I am right, with as little argument as they make use of to prove that I am wrong.

I think I have now little more to add. I shall here beg leave to thank
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the reader for taking the trouble to peruse this poor work of mine, which, perhaps, claims more than it deserves, when it begs his indulgence. He will be kind enough to remember, that it is a woman who writes, and she writes an account of herself: she cannot, therefore, be supposed free from natural weaknesses, to which, not only my frail mind, but the most enlightened and judicious intellects are daily subject. I have always kept one great point in view, which entitles my work to some regard, were it even a fable from the beginning to the end: I have all along endeavoured to intersperse the *useful* with the *agreeable*, and to dignify the readers amusement with sound maxims of prudence and virtue.

F I N I S.



